

Outside the Lines

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MLB News

Umpires' union self-destructs. See *22 Men Out* below.

Retired players sue game manufacturers for royalties. Darrel Chaney heads a group of retired players who have sued 10 game manufacturers, demanding the same royalties current players receive for the use of their names and statistics in computer games. Such royalties run from 8.5 to 9% of a game's net sales.

Interleague attendance up slightly. Boosted by a new format providing for more games between local rivals, attendance at interleague games averaged 33,482 fans – up 6.5% from 1998, and 21.7% more than the average for intraleague games.

2000 season likely to open in Japan. The Cubs and Mets have tentatively agreed to open the 2000 season with a two-game series in Japan. The games would be played at the Tokyo Dome on March 29 and 30, following four exhibitions against Japanese teams on the 27th and 28th. To help the clubs recover from jet lag upon their return to the United States, their next games would not be until April 4.

Rumors of possible contraction. Several owners have floated the possibility of reducing MLB to 28 teams by buying out weaker, small-market teams and dispersing their players among the other clubs. Potential candidates for dissolution include the Royals, Twins, Expos and Athletics. As such a move would require a 3/4 vote of the owners and would infuriate the MLBPA, don't hold your breath.

Around the Majors

Disney may sell the Angels. The Walt Disney Corporation may soon seek to sell both of its sports properties, the Angels and the NHL's Mighty Ducks. The combined asking price is rumored to be \$500 million.

Red Sox scrambling to finance proposed new park. The cost of the proposed "New Fenway" project has been estimated at \$545 million, including \$350 million for the park and \$195 million for land acquisition, infrastructure and parking garages. The Red Sox have offered to build the stadium if the government picks up the rest of the tab, but the club, which is still owned by a charitable trust formed by the late Jean Yawkey, has no capital to contribute. Meanwhile, a group called Save Fenway Park! has developed a plan to renovate the existing Fenway for \$120 million less.

Indians top early-season TV, cable ratings. As of May 16, the Cleveland Indians' local telecasts were averaging a 15.7 Nielsen rating, highest in the majors. Runners-up: the Cardinals (13.4), Braves (10.8), Orioles (10.3) and Mariners (9.7). Through the end of May, Indians' cablecasts averaged a 10.2 rating, followed by Seattle (8.2), Atlanta (5.3), Arizona and St. Louis (5.1 each). [I got this information from an Indians' press release. If anyone has more up-to-date information, or seasonal averages from past years, I'd love to run it. When I attended law school in Ann Arbor, the Tigers were so popular that their local outlet regularly pre-empted the entire NBC Thursday night lineup to show ballgames. Yes, I've been out a while...]

Marlins considering sites for new park. Owner John Henry announced that the Marlins are looking at six potential sites for a new park, including two in downtown Miami and four in nearby Broward County. Henry said that he'll finance the entire \$400 million, retractable-roofed park himself if necessary, but warned that if he does, the Marlins will remain a low-payroll team for years. "I don't think that's what this community wants," Henry said. "It's up to the community to decide how much their share should be, rather than me." He would, however, like the community to contribute at least \$300 million toward the park.

Royals' sale on hold. MLB has reportedly told Miles Prentice that his group's bid to buy the Kansas City Royals won't be approved in its current form. Concerns center around the group's unwieldy size (more than 40 investors) and possible undercapitalization. A vote on the proposed sale has been postponed until at

least September, and more likely January 2000.

Construction accident may delay opening of Brewers' new park. On July 14, a 567' crane which was lifting a 400-ton section of Miller Field's retractable roof collapsed in a 30 MPH wind, killing three people. Construction on the park, which was scheduled to open next April, has been temporarily halted. Damage estimates range from \$50-\$75 million, all of which will likely be covered by insurance; the Brewers have \$20 million insurance for revenue lost if the park doesn't open on time.

Twins may move to St. Paul. St. Paul mayor Norm Coleman has proposed a new downtown stadium for the Twins. The club and the city would each contribute \$8.5 million/year for 30 years towards a \$325 million outdoor stadium on the banks of the Mississippi; the park, with an estimated 38,000-40,000 seats, would open in 2003. The state would also be asked to fund about a third of the cost through a tax on player salaries, with the Twins responsible for cost overruns and any part of the state's share not covered by the tax.

As part of the deal, Twins owner Carl Pohlad has agreed in principle to sell the club to St. Paul interests. St. Paul voters will be asked to approve a half-cent sales tax to fund the city's contribution – but a July poll showed 80% of Minnesotans opposed to subsidizing a new park.

Local interests may keep Expos in Montreal. Team chairman Jacques Menard says that the Expos are close to raising \$50 million locally, which together with \$50 million from New York art dealer Jeffrey Loria (who would control 39% of the club) could secure the Expos' future in Montreal. Detested team president Claude Brochu would be bought out as part of the deal. The Quebec government is apparently willing to contribute \$8 million/year toward the cost of a \$100 million loan toward the cost of a new stadium.

Cablevision reportedly near deal to buy the Mets. Rebuffed in its efforts to buy the Yankees, Cablevision is reportedly negotiating to acquire control of the Mets for an estimated \$400 to \$500 million. Current owners Nelson Doubleday and Fred Wilpon would retain minority stakes. Cablevision already owns the Mets' TV rights, and also controls the New York Knicks, New York Rangers and Madison Square Garden.

Mariners demand more public money for Safeco Field. When Washington voters approved new taxes to produce \$372 million toward the estimated \$417 million cost of the Mariners' new stadium, the club agreed to finance the remaining \$45 million, plus any cost overruns. But when these overruns totaled an additional \$100 million, the Mariners asked the government to kick in an additional \$60 million generated by the taxes. King County officials refused. The Mariners then suggested that if the government held them to their end of the bargain, the club might not be able to afford to re-sign Ken Griffey, Jr. and/or Alex Rodriguez when they're eligible for free agency after the 2000 season.

The View from Japan, by Yoshihiro Koda

This year's Japanese All Star Games were held on July 24, 25 and 27. The Japanese leagues used to organize three All Star Games a year. Some years ago, the players' union complained that three games were too much. The union favored one game a year, like in North America. The League Office objected, though, noting that the players' pension fund received the profit from All Star Games. If only one All Star Game a year was played, the fund wouldn't have enough money to pay the pension due retired players.

Following negotiations between the union and League Office, the parties agreed to play two All Star Games a year, with a third every four years (in the year of the Summer Olympics). Although under this agreement, 1999 should have featured only two All Star Games, the league office explained that a third game was necessary to make up the shortfall in the players' pension fund.

Some fans probably welcome the extra All Star Game. Each of this year's three games drew capacity crowd. Some player may welcome it too: they can enjoy a summer vacation while others are playing ball games, and the longer the All Star break, the longer their vacation.

This year Kazuhisa Ishii was selected to the All Star Team for the first time in his career. He told a TV interviewer, "It's an honor for me. But I have been having a barbecue party with my friends at every All Star period until last year. It was my favorite event, as much as playing in an All Star Game. So I regret I will not be able to join it this year." This comment reveals the importance of the All Star Game to Ishii!

Katsuya Nomura is a field manager for the Hanshin Tigers. A former great catcher for the Nankai Hawks, he was selected to the All Star team almost every year of his career. He deplores the trend exemplified by Ishii, commenting, "When I was a player, it was a great honor for me to be selected to the All Star team. But the modern players don't feel so. Some of them regard playing at All Star Games as volunteer activity."

I wonder whether the multiple games may be one reason why some players lost their enthusiasm for

playing at All Star Games. The selected players may be envious of the non-selected players' summer vacation. Perhaps if Japan had one All Star game a year, American style, the All Star players might feel that honor of being selected overcame such feelings.

As for me, I don't like the long midseason break. The Japanese leagues had no regular season games from July 23 to 29 -- a seven-day suspension of the season, compared to only three days in North America. The issue of the players' pension fund is difficult and I have no ready solution -- but as a fan, I prefer the American-style All Star break.

22 Men Out, by Doug Pappas

On July 14, the calm of the All-Star break was shattered by astonishing news from the Major League Umpires' Association. After a meeting of the MLUA, union head Richie Phillips announced the resignation of 57 of the 66 major league umpires, effective September 2.

Phillips explained that MLB had hurt his the umps' feelings. His men "want to continue working as umpires," insisted Phillips, "but they want to feel good about themselves and would rather not continue as umpires if they have to continue under present circumstances. They feel in the past seven months or so, they have been humiliated and denigrated."

This "humiliation" and "denigration" took several forms. Many umps were outraged when umpire Tom Hallion was suspended for bumping a player -- though not as outraged as they'd be if a player *wasn't* suspended for bumping an ump. When MLB redefined the rulebook strike zone to reflect the umpires' collective refusal to call the high strike, Phillips insisted that MLB had no right to do so without MLUA approval.

Before the season, the MLUA blocked MLB's proposal to move control of the umpires from the league offices to the Commissioner's Office by claiming that the move would constitute a change of employer, entitling the umpires to millions in severance pay.

Phillips reserved his greatest scorn for attempts to hold the umpires accountable for their on-field performance. Upon learning of a MLBPA survey of players, coaches and managers which ranked each umpire against his peers, Phillips sneered, "I don't give any credence at all to ratings of officials because ratings are always subjective." When MLB asked clubs to chart pitches and file a report on each umpire's strike zone, Phillips snarled that this was "just another case of Big Brother watching over us."

An employer evaluating the competence of its employees. The nerve!

On the June 14 episode of HBO's *Real Sports*, Phillips took his arrogance to a new level. "I equate umpires with federal judges," said Phillips. "And I don't believe they should always be subject to the voter, just like federal judges are not subject to the voter." Sandy Alderson of MLB responded: "Federal judges can be impeached. I got worried when I found out that players were more concerned with who was umpiring the next day than they were about who was pitching."

Richie Phillips has run the MLUA since 1978. The umpires have prospered under his leadership: their annual salaries have risen from \$17,500 to \$95,000 for first-year umps, and from \$39,000 to \$250,000 or more for the most senior arbiters. Umpires now also receive paid vacations during the season. But throughout his tenure, Phillips has emphasized confrontation over shrewd bargaining. His in-your-face approach has worked in wage negotiations, where MLB can buy labor peace for virtual pocket change, but this time he picked the wrong battle and the wrong weapon. With one arrogant, blustering, breathtakingly stupid gesture, Phillips sent his membership on a suicide march.

In announcing the umpires' mass resignations, Phillips explained that as of September 2, they would be employed by a new company called 'Umpires, Inc.' Umpires, Inc. would negotiate to provide umpiring services to MLB -- and it, not MLB, would supervise and assign the umpires. In short, Phillips proposed to turn the umpires into a self-governing association, free of MLB control.

To owners and players alike, this demand was tantamount to a municipal police union demanding an end to civilian control of the police force. Even if the owners had been willing to cede such authority, the screams of the MLBPA would have killed the deal. And the owners weren't willing. When informed of the umpires' move, Sandy Alderson of the Commissioner's Office termed the resignations "either a threat to be ignored or an offer to be accepted."

Behind the scenes, Alderson and MLB's lawyers must have been exchanging high fives. By "resigning" -- a transparent attempt to evade the no-strike clause in their labor agreement -- the umpires had abandoned the protections of their contract and left themselves at MLB's mercy. Aided by the advice of their personal attorneys, a few arbiters came to the same conclusion and rescinded their resignations.

Cracks in Phillips' support soon appeared. While nearly all of the NL umpires still backed him, a sizable group of AL dissenters, who had earlier favored replacing Phillips with a less confrontational negotiator, publicly denounced him and urged their colleagues to do the same.

On July 22 and 23, the pressure on the umpires increased. MLB announced the hiring of 25 minor-league umpires to major league positions, effective September 2. Ironically, all the new umpires had major-league experience -- experience obtained when they filled in for umps taking the midseason vacations Phillips had won for them. MLB indicated its willingness to take back those umpires who rescinded their resignations, while warning that this offer would not remain open indefinitely.

Despite the weakness of his position, Phillips remained on the attack. On July 26, the MLUA sued MLB in federal court in Philadelphia, demanding that MLB give the umpires until September 2 to withdraw their resignations. The action was assigned to the same judge who, in 1996, had enjoined the MLUA from striking over the Roberto Alomar spitting incident -- a bad omen. That same day, AL president Gene Budig announced that the nine AL umpires who had not rescinded their resignations would lose their jobs on September 2.

On July 27 these nine, along with the remaining 33 NL umpires, withdrew their resignations. The NL office announced that it had only 20 openings for the 33 returnees. The next day a group of 14 dissident umpires, led by John Hirschbeck and Joe Brinkman, released a statement lamenting, "major league umpires have been seriously harmed because union leadership adopted a flawed strategy that was doomed to fail from the beginning. The advice to quit jobs in order to keep them made no sense at all, especially under a collective bargaining contract that not only ruled out strikes, but also ruled out 'other concerted work stoppage.'"

The 13 unwanted NL arbiters got the bad news on July 29. Richie Phillips vowed, "'I will fight absolutely to the death. I will never rest till I right this wrong. I have plenty of information. They know I have the files. I have their internal memos and I will expose the fraud that exists in baseball today.'" Taking a rhetorical cue from Phillips, Marcia Montague, wife of soon-to-be-former NL umpire Ed Montague, wrote John Hirschbeck's wife a letter calling him a "Judas in our midst, who sold us out for 20 pieces of gold." Phillips' supporters and detractors exchanged similarly nasty barbs through the media.

On August 4, the MLUA formally accused MLB of unfair labor practices in a complaint filed with the NLRB. The union argued that despite the no-strike clause in its contract, and even though it had never filed a grievance against the practices it now alleged had provoked the umpires into acting, MLB still had no right to accept the umps' signed resignations. Rather, claimed the MLUA, these resignations "must be viewed as a symbolic gesture aimed at inducing discussions between the two sides." As a "symbolic gesture," a raised middle finger would have conveyed the same message with much less risk.

The NLRB had not decided at press time whether to pursue the MLUA's claim. If, as expected, it does not, the unexpected departure of 22 major league umpires won't be the saddest part of this sorry tale. The saddest part will be when Richie Phillips unashamedly continues to collect his salary from the MLUA after destroying the careers of one-third of its membership.

MLB and Minorities, by Claudia Perry

Ricky Clemons, vice president for public relations and market development for Major League Baseball, is one of the game's few visible minority executives. But his outsider status certainly hasn't fostered anything like independent thought. At a sports panel discussion at July's Unity Journalism conference in Seattle, Clemons was confronted with the question as to why there wasn't more minority ownership in MLB (names like Oprah Winfrey and Quincy Jones were mentioned as possible owners). Clemons said with a straight face, "Because owning a team is a bad investment."

He then went to cite player payroll costs and small market TV revenue as examples of how owning a team would give you a poor return on your investment. He also mentioned the practice of the cash call, where owners are asked to pony up millions of dollars for the good of the game (or for their fellow owners. I wasn't entirely sure about this).

Although my head was spinning at this rather mysterious description of baseball revenue streams, Clemons then pointed out that there was a waiting list of people who wanted to own teams, which he noted consisted mostly of white males who were friends of current owners (ethnic characterization is mine, not Clemons').

I guess the white folks are smart enough to figure out how to make a franchise profitable, but minority owners can't manage this Herculean task. Talk about spin.

Clemons did offer one hard truth in response to a question as to why former players were always

being named front office positions. He noted that the ex-players had access in that baseball people rarely go outside of the familiar to make hires. This mindset also explains why minority hiring has not exactly proceeded speedily.

However, for all of Clemons' disingenuousness, the media business can't exactly stand up with pride on the minority baseball writing front. The sports editor of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel noted that he was one of five black sports editors in the Associated Press Sports Editors group. My informal count of baseball beat writers at the major league level reveals five Hispanics, three blacks and one Asian. One beat writer in another seminar mentioned that they would have the one guy who covered Team X (not being coy, I just can't remember which team it was) who spoke Spanish talk to the Hispanic ballplayers and then translate for his assembled colleagues. Let's hope he was a good guy and didn't make stuff up.

Chronology of Franchise Moves/New Franchises Since 1876, by **Doug Pappas**

- 1876 National League formed: original cities Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Hartford, Louisville, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis.
- 1877: New York and Philadelphia expelled from the NL for not playing out their schedule; Hartford moves to Brooklyn.
- 1878: Brooklyn and St. Louis leave NL, replaced by Indianapolis and Milwaukee. Cincinnati expelled for failing to pay its 1877 dues; a new Cincinnati organization is admitted.
- 1879: Indianapolis, Louisville and Milwaukee leave NL; Buffalo, Cleveland, Providence, Syracuse and Troy enter.
- 1880: Syracuse leaves, replaced by Worcester.
- 1881: Cincinnati expelled from the NL when it refuses to stop selling liquor or renting its grounds for Sunday games; Detroit enters.
- 1882: American Association forms: teams in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Louisville, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis.
- 1883: NL pressures Troy and Worcester into resigning; they're replaced by New York and Philadelphia AA adds teams in Columbus and New York.
- 1884: AA adds Brooklyn, Indianapolis, Richmond, Toledo and Washington (moves to Richmond in midseason). Union Association plays in Altoona (replaced midseason by Kansas City), Baltimore, Boston, Chicago (replaced midseason by Wilmington), Cincinnati, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, St. Louis, St. Paul, and Washington.
- 1885: AA loses Columbus, Indianapolis, Richmond, and Toledo. NL drops Cleveland and Providence, adds Pittsburgh and St. Louis (former UA franchise). UA collapses.
- 1886: NL drops Buffalo and Pittsburgh, adds Kansas City and Washington.
- 1887: St. Louis of the NL sold and moved to Indianapolis. NL drops Kansas City, adds Pittsburgh. AA drops Pittsburgh, adds Cleveland.
- 1888: AA drops New York, adds Kansas City.
- 1889: Cleveland switches from AA to NL and purchases Detroit's franchise rights. NL drops Detroit. AA adds Columbus to replace Cleveland.
- 1890: Brooklyn and Cincinnati of the AA switch to the NL. NL drops Indianapolis and Washington. AA adds a new Brooklyn franchise, drops Kansas City, adds Rochester, Syracuse and Toledo. Players' League forms, with teams in Boston, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh.
- 1891: Players League merged into the others: PL clubs in Brooklyn, Chicago, New York and Pittsburgh bought by their NL counterparts; Buffalo and Cleveland purchased and dissolved; Boston and Cincinnati join the AA. AA drops Brooklyn, Rochester, Syracuse and Toledo, adds Milwaukee and Washington.
- 1892: NL and AA merge, with Baltimore, Louisville, St. Louis and Washington joining the NL and Boston, Cincinnati, Columbus and Philadelphia bought out. NL now 12-team league.
- 1900: NL drops Baltimore, Cleveland, Louisville and Washington.
- 1901: AL raises itself from minor league to major league status: keeps its clubs in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and Milwaukee, drops Buffalo, Indianapolis, Kansas City and Minneapolis, and adds Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington.
- 1902: AL shifts Milwaukee to St. Louis.

- 1903: AL shifts Baltimore to New York.
 1953: NL shifts Boston to Milwaukee.
 1954: AL shifts St. Louis to Baltimore.
 1955: AL shifts Philadelphia to Kansas City.
 1958: NL shifts Brooklyn to Los Angeles, New York to San Francisco.
 1961: AL shifts Washington to Minneapolis-St. Paul, adds expansion franchises in Los Angeles and Washington.
 1962: NL adds expansion franchises in Houston and New York
 1966: NL shifts Milwaukee to Atlanta.
 1968: AL shifts Kansas City to Oakland.
 1969: NL adds expansion franchises in Montreal and San Diego; AL adds expansion franchises in Kansas City and Seattle.
 1970: AL shifts Seattle to Milwaukee.
 1972: AL shifts Washington to Dallas-Fort Worth.
 1977: AL adds expansion franchises in Seattle and Toronto.
 1993: NL adds expansion franchises in Denver and Miami.
 1998: Milwaukee switches from AL to NL; NL adds expansion franchise in Phoenix; AL adds expansion franchise in Tampa-St. Petersburg.

The Farm Report: The Business of Minor League Baseball, compiled by **Anthony Salazar**
The Mid-Summer PCL Report

Baseball fans are flocking to the games from Omaha, NE to Tacoma, WA. The mid-summer Pacific Coast League attendance reports are in, and they look pretty good. The top five teams are sorted here by number of home (H) games divided by total home attendance. The result is the average number of fans attending games. Here they are:

Rank	Team (MLB Affiliate)	H Dates	H Attd.	H Avg.
1	Salt Lake Buzz (Twins)	54	397,1197,354	
2	Oklahoma Redhawks (Rangers)	51	343,1306,728	
3	New Orleans Zephyrs (Astros)	50	331,8956,638	
4	Iowa Cubs (Cubs)	48	297,4836,198	
5	Memphis Redbirds (Cardinals)	57	313,7905,505	

A Big Day in the Midwest Gate

A record number of fans went through the turnstiles at Midwest League (A) games on Saturday, July 10th. The total number of fans at these games was 47,368. Here's the breakdown:

Team (MLB Affiliate)	
Kane County Cougars (Marlins)	12,071
West Michigan White Caps (Tigers)	9,090
Lansing Lugnuts (Cubs)	8,640
Quad City Bandits (Twins)	7,146
Ft. Wayne Wizards (Padres)	5,346
Peoria Chiefs (Cardinals)	3,656
Burlington Bees (White Sox)	1,419

One Million Shorebird Fans

The one millionth fan walked through the turnstiles at the Delmarva Shorebirds' Perdue Stadium recently. The Class A South Atlantic team began the existence in April 1996, all three years as an affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles. The lucky fan was treated to an extensive list of gifts that included a lifetime pass to Shorebird games, assorted teamwear and tickets to an Orioles game, among other prizes.

Iowa Cubs on the Sellers Block

The Iowa Cubs (AAA-Pacific Coast), affiliate of the Chicago Cubs, have recently announced plans to sell the Des Moines, IA-based club. Team owner Ken Grandquist bought the team with other investors in 1982. At

the opening game of this season, Grandquist collapsed with a stroke and died. His wife, Linda, acting on previously arranged plans to sell the club to local investors, will have to wait until approval of the sale is granted by the league and MLB.

Volcanoes Erupt with High Ticket Sales - Again

The San Francisco Giants' Northwest League affiliate Salem-Keizer Volcanoes have announced that their season tickets sales broke the 100,000 mark for the third consecutive year. The Volcanoes watched as 136,836 fans fill their stands in their first year in 1997, and in 1998 they had 133,980 fans.

Diablos Conduct a Safety Check

The El Paso Diablos (AA-Texas) an Arizona Diamondbacks affiliate, teamed up with the local Daimler-Chrysler dealer to promote seat belt awareness. The event brought the community together to provide an understanding on the effects of drinking and driving, and seat belt safety. The automotive business brought along a drunk driving simulator that gave adults a chance to experience the effects of driving while impaired.

California Fall League Set to Play

Four teams in the Class A California League have announced plans to host the inaugural year of the California Fall League. The Lancaster JetHawks, San Bernardino Stampede, Lake Elsinore Storm and Rancho Cucamonga Quakes, will serve as hosts for the 42-game season that begins September 30th and runs to November 5th. The sites chosen because of their proximity to each other, will provide for 28 players on each team, and will come from Class A and Class AA teams. The 112 players will wear the cap of their fall league team, and the jersey of their respective parent club. The top two teams will play a championship game at the end of the season.

Greenville Braves Hit Another Milestone

Municipal Stadium, home of the Greenville Braves (Southern-AA), Atlanta Braves affiliate, has once again been filled with fans reaching in numbers of over 200,000. This latest feat is merely the 16th time in their 16 years of existence that the Braves have amassed this many fans coming to their games. With 15 home dates left in the season, the Braves have had over 203,000 fans this year.

The Express Moves into Overdrive

Construction of the home for the Round Rock Express (AA-Texas) is progressing right along. The home opener is set for April 2000, but in the meantime, construction of the concourse and conference center is underway, while the fabrication of the steel structure continues. The stadium will hold approximately 7,800 fans.

Document of the Month

This month features a November 1916 National Commission memo to all major league club presidents, enclosing a new form of player's contract. The memo notes that as a result of the Federal League war, some players were able to procure contracts which did not contain a renewal clause, but makes clear that such contracts will no longer be approved:

"The Commission has reason to believe that some major league players, whose expired contracts did not contain a renewal clause, will decline to concede further claim of their respective clubs to their services on the ground that at the expiration of their contracts they become free agents.

"Club-owners were compelled to make extraordinary concessions to players in order to placate them and prevent them from deserting to Federal Clubs. Salaries were virtually dictated by players, long-term contracts became common and in some instances, the player could be retained only by eliminating the renewal clause from his contract. Base Ball must be brought back to its normal basis.

"With full realization that the reserve rule is not only a bulwark of professional base ball, and of inestimable benefit to the players, in assuring them as a class, regular employment at salaries adequate to their expertness, the Commission will hold in all such cases that the major league club, to which a player was under contract at the close of last season is entitled to retain him for 1917, if it so desires, and will not countenance the claim of any other club to such player that is not predicated on his purchase or release from

his 1916 Club.

"The Commission will not approve or recognize any contract not in the new form and without change or modification of any of its provisions in any particular."

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