Outside the Lines

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Chairman's Note

Do I have your current E-mail address? A reminder: in early January, the Sixth Annual Business of Baseball Committee Survey will be E-mailed to all newsletter recipients with an E-mail address on file with me. If you have any doubt whether I have your correct, current E-mail address, drop me a note. If you want to participate in the survey but don't have an E-mail address, send me a SASE.

Reminders:

* The Committee maintains an electronic mailing list.
  To subscribe, send an e-mail to BaseballBiz-subscribe@egroups.com.
* **John Matthew** is coordinating a Committee project to compile a roster of all major league general managers. For more information, E-mail him at john.matthew@home.com.
* If you'd rather receive the newsletter in electronic form, let me know and I'll e-mail it to you in either ASCII or WordPerfect format.

MLB News

Year in review:

Salaries: Up 13.82%, based on August 31 rosters, to an average of $1,789,556. The median rose from $500,000 to $550,000.

Attendance: Up 3.7%, to an average of 30,099/game and a total of 72,748,970.

TV ratings: Down, down, down. Down 10% for FOX during the regular season; down 15% on ESPN and ESPN2; down 16% for ESPN's divisional series games; down over 20% for NBC and FOX's divisional series games; down 32% for the LCS (albeit with a Presidential debate airing opposite one game), down 22.5% for the World Series. FOX subsequently claimed a $70 million loss on the postseason.

FOX pays $2.5 billion for 2001-06 TV rights. The new package (signed before the postseason ratings debacle noted above) includes telecasts which aired on five separate broadcast and cable networks during the 2000 season: renewal of FOX's regular-season Saturday afternoon games plus half of the postseason; NBC's half of the postseason; ESPN's divisional playoff games; and renewal of the weekly FOX Sports and FX cablecasts. ESPN's regular-season telecasts are not affected. The contract, valued at $417 million/year, gives MLB 44% more than the $290 million/year it received for these same rights under the contracts which ran from 1996-2000. It also allows MLB to receive its money even if games are canceled due to a strike or lockout; if that happens, FOX will receive extra games to telecast once the dispute ends.

Umpires approve new five-year contract. The new deal, ratified by a vote of 40-2, gives the umpires raises of roughly 15%. Depending on seniority, arbiters will earn between $104,704 and $324,545 in 2000, between $108,716 and $404,705 in 2004. (These figures include a $23,000 bonus in any year in which the postseason is played, plus bonuses of up to $37,500 for working the postseason and serving as a crew chief.) Umpires will also receive $300/day for expenses on the road, up from $240, and for the first time will be given cars by MLB. Those retiring in 2000 or thereafter will receive substantial pension increases B those retiring at age 55 get a 52% boost, to $72,746.

In other issues, umpires will now receive tenure after three years (down from five); will for the first time have a seat on the official Playing Rules Committee; and will receive up to 91 days pay in the event of a labor stoppage, up from 75 days under the old plan. The owners must consult with the umpires before implementing any new policies or directive, such as the size of the strike zone or ways to speed up the game. Although the umps lost their bid for an independent arbitrator to hear grievances, they won a partial concession: grievances will be processed by an independent fact-finder, who will then present his findings to the Commissioner for action. During negotiations, MLB offered to rehire 13 of the 22 umpires terminated last year, but the 22, still represented by Richie Phillips, opted instead to pursue their grievance. (With the players' CBA due to expire after the 2001 season, the owners may want to offer the players cash bonuses to replace Donald Fehr with Phillips. Think of the savings if every disastrous free agent signee could be induced to breach his contract in midseason...)

Games longer than ever. The average nine-inning regular season game lasted 2:58, up five minutes from 1999 and four minutes longer than the previous record, set in 1994. The postseason was even worse: the average nine-inning World Series game ran 3:30, and in Game 5 of the ALCS, the Yankees and Mariners took 4:14 to play an 8-1/2-inning game in which eight runs were scored.

World Series ticket prices raised $10. Box seats to the Subway Series cost $160 or $130; reserved seats $110 or $95; bleachers and general admission $50. These represent a $10 across-the-board increase from the prices which prevailed in 1998 and 1999.

Around the Majors

Red Sox to be sold for the first time since 1933. In apparent recognition that the club can't afford its share of a proposed $665 million new stadium, the Jean R. Yawkey Trust, controlled by Sox CEO John Harrington, has put its controlling 53% interest in the Red Sox up for sale. Dozens of prospective bidders have contacted the club, including one quixotic attempt to raise a nine-figure sum through pledges from interested fans. Several local legislators, noting that Harrington never suggested a sale was imminent when lobbying the government for the stadium project, suggest they'll try to hold up the project until the new owner has been identified.

Mets owners split on new stadium. Although Fred Wilpon has long been touting a Anew Ebbets Field@ in the form of a retractable-domed park to be built in the Shea Stadium parking lot, Nelson Doubleday, who owns the other 50% of the club, doesn't see a great deal of taxpayer money to build the New York Mets a stadium and would prefer to renovate Shea. Soon thereafter Mayor Rudy Giuliani proposed that the city, New York State and the team each pay one-third of the cost. (When the issue of public subsidies for sports stadia came up in a New York Senate debate, Rick Lazio favored them, while Senator-elect Hillary Rodham Clinton opposed them.)

Yankees, MSG renew for one year as litigation continues. After the courts enjoined the Yankees from creating their own cable network in violation of MSG's contractual right of first refusal, the Yankees offered to renew the MSG deal for 10 years B at a price of $1.3 billion up front or $2.4 billion over 10 years. MSG returned to court, terming the proposal Aludicrous, inflated, based on erroneous financial assumptions.@ The Yankees responded by offering a one-year renewal for $52 million B just $1.3 million more than MSG paid in 2000 B but without the right-of-first-refusal clause found in the previous contract. MSG accepted the offer, but reserved its right to challenge the removal of the right-of-first-refusal clause.

Athletics and Giants continue to spar over territory. According to Murray Chass's column in the October 8 *New York Times*, the Major League Constitution defines Oakland's territory as Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, on the east side of San Francisco Bay, while the Giants control Marin, San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. (By contrast, the Constitution gives both teams in the other two-team markets the same territory, specifying that it be shared.) The owners of the Athletics have talked about moving the team, or selling it to someone who would move the team, to Silicon Valley, but the Giants have made clear they will oppose any such move. Changing the Constitution to allow the Athletics to move over the Giants' objections would require a three-fourths vote of all 30 owners.

Phillies may finally get their new stadium. In the same vote, the Pennsylvania legislature approved funds for new ballparks in both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. While the Pirates move into their new home next spring, the Phillies have yet to break ground. Philadelphia has finally decided upon a site, though: the same ugly warehouse district in which Veterans Stadium is situated. The Phillies will pay $172 million of the estimated $346 million cost, with the state and city to fund the remainder. The team is responsible for stadium cost overruns, while the city must pay for any increase in land acquisition costs. The Phillies will be responsible for maintenance expenses and must pay $1.375 million/year into a city fund B but in return will receive all income from the facility, including parking, concessions and naming rights. The new park, projected to open in 2004, will have 45,000 seats and 75 luxury suites.

Padres claim $87 million in losses since 1995. Club president Larry Lucchino said the Padres have been Aspending beyond our means in an effort to keep the team competitive.@ In fact, they spent more than the division-winning Giants, with four players (Trevor Hoffman, Randy Myers, Sterling Hitchcock and the aging shell of Tony Gwynn) earning more than the $6 million the Giants paid league MVP Jeff Kent. Can you say Aself-inflicted wound@? Meanwhile, construction on the Padres' new park was halted, in an apparent attempt to force the city to implement the promised permanent bond funding.

Canada's largest cable operator buys the Blue Jays. Rogers Communications, owner of Canada's largest cable TV system as well as other radio and TV interests, will buy 80% of the Jays for $112 million. Interbrew S.A., which acquired a majority interest when it purchased Labatt's, will retain 20%, with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce selling the 10% it has owned since the team's founding in 1977.

Senate Holds Hearing on ACompetitive Balance@ by **Doug Pappas**

Even with Congress in recess and the Presidential election in dispute, on November 21 the Senate Judiciary Committee found time for a hearing on competitive balance in baseball. Commissioner Bud Selig was the lead witness, followed by George Will and former Senator George Mitchell, both members of the owners' blue ribbon economic committee; sportscaster/author Bob Costas; Washington State economist Rodney Fort, co-author of *Pay Dirt: The Business of Professional Team Sports*; and self-appointed fan representative Frank Stadulis, president of United Sports Fans of America. All but Costas submitted prepared statements, which are available online at http://www.senate.gov/~judiciary/wl112120.htm.

Selig voiced his familiar lament: an increasing number of our clubs have become unable to successfully compete for their respective Division Championships thereby making post-season appearances let alone post-season success an impossibility. ... At the start of spring training, there no longer exists hope and faith for the fans of more than half of our 30 clubs.

Did you sleep through the 2000 season, Bud? In case you missed it:

- For the first time in modern history, no team won fewer than 40% or more than 60% of its games.
- Three of the 10 highest-payroll teams qualified for the playoffs.
- So did three of the 14 lowest-payroll clubs.
- Two of the cheap teams, the Giants and White Sox, finished with the best records in their leagues.
- Both Western Division champs, the Giants and Athletics, had the lowest payroll in their divisions.
- The Yankees, Exhibit A in any discussion of competitive balance, finished with the majors' ninth best record, 3-1/2 games worse than any other postseason qualifier.
- The eight playoff clubs ranked first, third, sixth, 11th, 14th, 17th, 25th and 26th in Opening Day payroll.
- The six last-place clubs ranked ninth, 10th, 13th, 16th, 20th, and 30th. In fact, two of the six, Texas and Tampa Bay, spent more than the average payroll of the postseason qualifiers.

Unsurprisingly, Selig never specified *which* 16 clubs (Amore than half@) were out of the race before Opening Day. Whatever the merits of greater revenue sharing, overstated, alarmist statements like this can only hurt Selig's cause and having the Commissioner repeatedly tell fans of losing teams that they have no realistic hope for the future can only exacerbate MLB's problems in those markets.

Selig undercut his own credibility in another way. First he quoted his own testimony to a House committee in 1994 that baseball's economic problems have become so serious that in many of our cities the >competitive hope that is the very essence of our game [is] being eroded. Later he identified nine markets -- Montreal, Milwaukee, Tampa Bay, Toronto, Florida, Kansas City, Minnesota, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati -- where Ait is beyond debate that competitive imbalance is causing serious issues today.

But these can't be the same cities he was referring to in 1994. That year Tampa Bay didn't have a team; Florida was a second-year expansion club which had drawn over 3,000,000 fans in its first season; Montreal had the majors' best record; Pittsburgh had won its division in three of the previous four years; and among them, Cincinnati, Minnesota and Toronto had won the past four World Series. Only Kansas City and Selig's own Milwaukee Brewers could possibly have been on both lists and only the Brewers had no history of recent success for their fans to recall.

Well aware of his audience, Selig backed away from the Blue Ribbon Panel's most politically controversial recommendation, the relocation of franchises to better markets. He assured Congress that no team would move before the 2001 season, and suggested no move would be approved at least until a new labor deal was in place.

Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH), a Reds season ticket holder, pressed Selig to explain why he thought the MLBPA would accept the sweeping changes in baseball economics he demanded. Isn't it going to depress wages? asked DeWine. Selig responded, AI think if we as an industry do this right, I don't think it has that effect at all. Although Selig didn't explain what doing it right would entail, greater revenue sharing will inevitably depress wages unless accompanied by steep minimum-payroll requirements to compel low-payroll teams to raise salaries by at least the amount by which high-payroll clubs' salaries are reduced.

The statements of Blue Ribbon Panel members suggested that this could indeed be the strategy. Senator Mitchell reiterated the Panel's recommendation for sharing of 40-50% of local revenues, accompanied by a 50% luxury tax on payrolls over $84 million (using August 31 payrolls, six teams topped this threshold in 2000), with incentives to bring all payrolls to at least $40 million (eight teams, including two playoff clubs, were below this figure in 2000). In his statement, George Will described the $84 million tax threshold as a Aporous ceiling on payrolls, whereas the floor is firm, because of the powerful incentive (access to unequal distributions from the >commissioner's pool) to meet the payroll minimum of $40 million. Noting that he had backed the players in the 1994-95 labor dispute, Will challenged the MLBPA, led by my friend Don Fehr, to avoid sterile strategies and stereotypes.

Mitchell also defended the Blue Ribbon Panel′s reliance on financial data provided by the clubs. Responding to widespread criticism that the report overstated MLB's collective losses, Mitchell said that Anothing in our report or recommendations turns on the issue of Club profitability or a lack thereof, but went on to say, we do not doubt the accuracy of the financial data revenues, expenses, profits and losses. This misses the point: the critics aren′t challenging the *accuracy* of the data, but whether it represents meaningful economic reality, particularly with respect to related-party transactions. The data was further undermined by Selig′s testimony: he claimed that 18 to 20 teams lost money in 2000, which would be seven to nine fewer than supposedly posted a loss from 1995-99, notwithstanding double-digit annual salary increases and flat national media revenues throughout this period.

Selig′s testimony further suggests that the current revenue sharing formula is grievously flawed. According to the Commissioner, the Yankees paid $17 million and the Mets $15 million B but the Yankees drew 500,000 more fans at a higher price per ticket, and receive $30 million more for their local media rights! He testified that the five lowest-revenue teams (at a guess, the Expos, Twins, Royals, Pirates and Brewers) received from $11 million to $23 million. As the Twins opened the season with a payroll of $16.5 million, this means that billionaire Carl Pohlad′s entire team was effectively paid by George Steinbrenner.

For his statement, Professor Fort drew upon *Financial World* and *Forbes* data for recent years, as well as the payroll and profitability data presented to Congress in the 1950s as part of earlier Congressional investigations of baseball. Fort concluded that modern revenue imbalances Aare as high in each league as in any year except the early 1950s in the AL,@ when the Yankees dominated even more than they do today. However, competitive balance has been steadily improving over the decades, with 2000 the AL's most balanced season in 40 years.

Reviewing the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations, Fort concluded that greater revenue sharing and a luxury tax were most likely to improve competitiveness, but that both would depress player salaries to the point that the MLBPA would not accept them without receiving concessions in other areas. Unequal central-fund distributions could improve competitiveness without antagonizing the MLBPA, but minimum-payroll requirements have historically been difficult to enforce. Fort's preferred solution is to divide Major League Baseball into competing American and National Leagues. This would lead to more teams in the largest markets and a consequent reduction in the financial advantages enjoyed by large-market clubs, improving on-field competitiveness through increased off-field competition.

Finally, UsFANS' Frank Stadulis presented an unintentional parody of research and analysis. Outdoing even Commissioner Selig, he opined that Atwo-thirds of the teams B and their fans B were destined to disappointment before the season even began, because the odds against their making the playoffs and clearly against succeeding in the playoffs were prohibitive.@ As eight out of 30 clubs qualify for the playoffs, Stadulis apparently believed that only two other teams had any realistic chance. He didn′t identify which 20 teams he had ruled out, though with the UsFANS Web site offering Afree access to wagering tips@ to its paying members, his constituents might be especially interested in their leader′s gift of prophecy.

After modestly asserting that his organization was Ain a unique position to determine and focus fan views, Stadulis claimed a mandate to act because 94% of respondents to a survey on the USFANS Web site said Yes when asked, "Do you support a movement that would require Major League Baseball and its Players' Association to take whatever steps are necessary to restoring competitive balance, or parity, to the game.@

As evidence of the mood and intensity of fan concern, Stadulis cited a message posted to the UsFANS Web site in April which condemned Shawn Green and his selfish attitude,said Ateams with low payrolls have no chance of competing, and identified the Yankees, Red Sox, Cards, Mets, Braves, Diamondbacks, Rangers, and Indians as the likely playoff teams. Stadulis said the poster correctly predicted five of the playoff teams; in fact, he got *four* correct. Even at a hearing as fundamentally pointless as this one, Stadulis′ presence was an embarrassment which could only confer a legitimacy on his group which, if his testimony and Web site are any indication, it has done nothing to deserve.

The Farm Report, by **Anthony Salazar**

Owners From Greensboro Tour Stadiums. Owners of the Greensboro Bats (SAL-Yankees) and Greensboro city officials visited Canal Park, home of the Akron Aeros (EL-Indians), to view the facilities. The Greensboro group is trying to determine whether to tear down or renovate the team's 74-year old, 7,500-seat War Memorial Stadium. Akron's 9,097-seat Canal Park, built in 1997, was the first stop for the group., which next heads to Chattanooga to tour the Lookouts' (SL-Reds) new downtown ballpark.

Teams Find Home in Pacific Northwest. When the Portland Family Entertainment (PFE) group bought the rights to a Triple A team to play in the historic Civic Stadium, the Albuquerque Dukes had been looking for a buyer. With that, the Dukes operation moved to Portland, where they will be known as the Beavers, the moniker of the previous PCL team that left the Rose City in 1992. The Portland Beavers will begin next season as a Triple A team of the San Diego Padres. The Beavers′ arrival dislodged the Northwest League Portland Rockies, which relocated to Pasco, WA, and will be known as the Tri-Cities Dust Devils. The club, which is also owned by PFE, will remain an affiliate of the Colorado Rockies for at least two more years. It will join Boise, Spokane and Yakima in the newly created eastern division of the NWL; the western division will be comprised of Eugene, Everett, Salem-Keizer and Vancouver, BC

Portland Owners Turn to Pension Fund for Loan. To finance their new acquisitions, the PFE group borrowed $23.4 million from the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association-College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF). The loan will be paid back over 21 years. The PFE, which also owns a minor league soccer team, has a 20-year lease agreement with the city of Portland to operate PGE Park, the former Civic Stadium. Portland General Electric agreed to pay $710,000 annually for the naming rights. The revenue is part of the $5 million fund being pumped in to renovate the 74-year old stadium.

Dukes Put Up For Sale Again. For the second time in a year, the independent Duluth-Superior Dukes of the Northern League are for sale. Owner Harry Stavrenos told fellow owners and the league commission that he was unable to keep the team due to a lack of resources. Stavrenos, former owner of the Sioux Falls Canaries, is now also a managing partner of the San Jose Giants (CAL- Giants). The league is seeking an ownership group from within the State of Minnesota.

TAWS Future Subject of Debate. Officials for the Triple A World Series (TAWS) have been discussing changes in the event. Since 1998, the TAWS has been a best-of-seven series played in Cashman Field in Las Vegas. Beginning next year, the event will be a best-of-three series, and will be held on the weekend, where officials hope attendance and television ratings will improve. Las Vegas, home of the Stars (PCL-Dodgers), had been thought to be an ideal location, but the series never attracted much local attention, and had to compete with numerous other events. New Orleans, which had previously been discussed as a site for the TAWS, may be considered again.

Reno May be in Cards for Cal League. For the past several seasons, the Visalia Oaks (CAL-A's) have gone through plenty of hardship and heartache. Their previous owner, effectively abandoned the club, which had to be made a ward of the league. Their stadium is one of the oldest and worst in the league, and major league affiliation has always been an issue. New team owners are now listening to overtures from representatives from Reno, NV about a possible relocation. Oaks owners have been encouraged by Reno′s interest, in sharp contrast to Visalia's disinterest. The team drew only 891 fans a game, and has been unable to persuade the city council to fund improvements to 54-year-old Rec Park, let alone build a new stadium.

Peoria Kicks in Funds for New Stadium. The city council of Peoria, IL has agreed to provide up to $3.5 million towards the construction of a new $16.5 million ballpark. The new home of the Peoria Chiefs (MWL-Cardinals) will be built in the downtown area as part of an urban renewal project. The club hopes to have the stadium operational in time for the 2002 season.

Minors Announce New Affiliations for the 2001 Season. At the end of each season, clubs in the minors and majors re-evaluate their affiliations. The Dodgers were especially busy, keeping only two of their relationships: they have made partnerships with teams in Las Vegas and Jacksonville, while giving up locations in San Bernardino and Yakima. Check out the list below, and see where your favorite team has landed.

TRIPLE A

Team	*2000 Affiliate*	*2001 Affiliate*
Edmonton (PCL)	Angels	Twins
Las Vegas (PCL)	Padres	Dodgers
Portland (PCL)*	Dodgers	Padres
Salt Lake (PCL)	Twins	Angels

DOUBLE A

Arkansas (SL)	Cardinals	Angels
Erie (EL)	Angels	Tigers
Jacksonville (SL)	Tigers	Dodgers
New Haven (EL)	Mariners	Cardinals
San Antonio (TL)	Dodgers	Mariners

HIGH SINGLE A

Bakersfield (CAL)	Giants	Devil Rays
High Desert (CAL)	Diamondbacks	Brewers
Lake Elsinore (CAL)	Angels	Padres
Lancaster (CAL)	Mariners	Diamondbacks
Mudville (CAL)	Brewers	Reds
Rancho Cucamonga (CAL)	Padres	Angels
San Bernardino (CAL)	Dodgers	Mariners

LOW SINGLE A

Burlington (MWL)	White Sox	Royals
Lakewood (SAL)#	Expos	Phillies
Charleston, WV (SAL)	Royals	Blue Jays
Clinton (MWL)	Reds	Expos
Hagerstown (SAL)	Blue Jays	Giants
Piedmont (SAL)	Phillies	White Sox

SHORT SEASON

Auburn (NY-P)	Astros	Blue Jays
Boise (NWL)	Angels	Cubs
Eugene (NWL)	Cubs	Padres
Pittsfield (NY-P)	Mets	Astros
Queens (NY-P)	Blue Jays	Mets
Yakima (NWL)	Dodgers	Diamondbacks

ROOKIE

Butte (PL)	Angels	Rockies
Helena (PL)	Brewers	Angels

* Former Albuquerque Dukes
# Former Cape Fear Crocs

Relocated Franchises Help Minors Break Attendance Records. Build it and they will come, according to the >Field of Dreams' adage. Several Minor League Baseball teams did just that, and were rewarded with high attendance in their new home towns and new ballparks. In the PCL, the Sacramento River Cats brought in 861,808 fans to the new Raley Field -- 620,000 more than they drew last year as the Vancouver Canadians. The Round Rock Express of the Texas League attracted 660,110 fans, compared to the meager 99,240 they had the year before as the Jackson Generals. The Dayton Dragons of the MWL drew 581,853 fans, versus the 61,851 fans who watched them as the Rockford Cubbies in 1999. Overall, according to Minor League Baseball, attendance rose 7.3% in 2000, to 37,741,620 fans B the third highest since 1949.

***2000 Minor League Attendance, By League*:**

Classification	League	Total	Average
AAA	International	6,552,675	7,023
	Pacific Coast	6,653,368	6,054
	Mexican	3,589,276	3,901
AA	Eastern	3,719,724	4,596
	Southern	2,424,846	3,619
	Texas	2,267,907	4,223
A	California	1,549,788	2,246
	Carolina	1,611,255	3,099
	Florida State	953,120	1,047
	Midwest	3,268,473	3,652
	South Atlantic	1,954,697	2,150
Short Season A	New York-Penn	1,322,739	2,619
	Northwest	1,041,639	3,461
Rookie A	Appalachian	276,431	912
	Pioneer	461,881	1,555

2000 Top 25 Minor League Clubs In Attendance

1. Sacramento River Cats	861,808
2. Memphis Redbirds	859,851
3. Louisville RiverBats	685,863
4. Buffalo Bisons	667,540
5. Indianapolis Indians	655,073
6. Saltillo Sarape Makers	590,250
7. Pawtucket Red Sox	585,107
8. Dayton Dragons	581,853
9. Salt Lake Buzz	511,423
10. Yucatan Lions	491,132
11. Iowa Cubs	483,176
12. Akron Aeros	481,060
13. Norfolk Tides	479,741
14. Durham Bulls	475,363
15. Kane County Cougars	470,906
16. Rochester Red Wings	459,494
17. Columbus Clippers	458,806
18. Scranton/WB Red Barons	458,584

19. Reading Phillies	452,343
20. Richmond Braves	451,479
21. Monterrey Sultans	445,760
22. New Orleans Zephyrs	443,526
23. West Michigan Whitecaps	436,751
24. Lansing Lugnuts	416,332
25. Oklahoma RedHawks	416,196

Anthony Salazar, the co-owner and vice president of LatinoBaseball.com, writes on topics in Latin baseball history and minor league baseball. Contact him at salazar@latinobaseball.com.

The Messersmith Decision: A Look Back.

On December 23, 1975, arbitrator Peter Seitz found for Andy Messersmith and Dave McNally in their grievance over interpretation of the reserve clause contained in the standard player contract. Here are quotes from some of the key players, as reported in *The Sporting News* during 1976-77.

Peter Seitz: "I had no deadline. I didn't have to issue a decision in five days or five weeks. I told the owners, "Take the case out of my hands. Negotiate with the players and settle your differences." But the owners rebuffed me completely and said "No, we want a decision now."

Commissioner Bowie Kuhn: "It is just inconceivable that after nearly 100 years of developing this system for the overall good of the game, it should be obliterated in this way."

AL president Lee MacPhail: "The players have not suffered financially under the present reserve system. The prospect of a sharp rise in player salaries on top of what they've already achieved could make investment in a baseball franchise very unattractive."

MLBPA general counsel Dick Moss: "Talk of bankruptcies and grave economic problems does not square with what management has been saying in bargaining sessions. At no time have management representatives claimed inability to pay for proposals suggested by the players. On the contrary, management's negotiators have made it clear they are not pleading in this vein. As a matter of fact, under the law, management must show its books if it claims inability to pay. If management has problems in this area, we'd be happy to accommodate them after examining their books."

Andy Messersmith explained that he still wanted to play for the Dodgers "in fact he filed the grievance only after "[w]e couldn't get together on salary and a no-trade clause in my contract." (Messersmith ultimately signed with the Braves for about $1 million over three years.)

Dave McNally, who retired after the 1975 season and never returned to the majors, said he pressed the grievance mostly out of concern for younger players: "I think many younger players are held back without getting a full opportunity. I don't think older players suffer particularly under the reserve system."

Owners' negotiator John Gaherin to Marvin Miller, reacting at the bargaining table to news that the owners had lost their court challenge to the result of the arbitration: "We must be realistic. We will proceed as though this decision does not exist."

After the season, Bowie Kuhn insisted that the higher salaries resulting from free agency would inevitably lead to higher ticket prices. Marvin Miller disagrees and so does one owner: "That the burden is passed along to the fans is a myth. The owners absorb it. If we passed along our increased cost of doing business because of the free agent draft, it would be unbelievable. We would have had to raise our prices 10 times over what we have." (Who uttered this heresy, Bill Veeck? No; the speaker was none other than Bud Selig, quoted in the January 8, 1977 *TSN*.)

Roster Changes

New members:
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