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## A CHANCE TO UPGRADE QUALITY OF PLAY

Major league talent is not nearly so thin as a few scoffers would have us believe. Nevertheless, the majors operate today under self-imposed restrictions which curb player development. Club owners will have a chance to correct matters at their midsummer meeting in Dearborn, Mich., July 21.

Deserving prompt approval is a proposal submitted by General Manager Buzzie Bavasi of the Dodgers. Bavasi wants a player exempted from the unrestricted draft until the second selection meeting following his signing.

An unrestricted draft of all players on minor league rosters was part of the free-agent draft legislation enacted last December. The unrestricted draft was designed to give every youngster maximum opportunity to advance. It was supposed to prevent "cold storage" of talent in the minors.

It appears the measure went too far. For example, a free agent who signs in June plays perhaps two months of pro ball before the season ends. He is then subject to the unrestricted draft unless the parent club promotes him to its own roster. An intelligent decision on a boy's ability cannot be made this quickly.

A club deserves at least one full season to observe any prospects it signs. Bavasi's proposal would provide it, and we think his plan should be approved.

Another proposition, offered by G. M. Bob Howsam of the Cardinals, would kill the oft-criticized first-year player rule a few days before the 1965 season ends. The alternative would leave it in effect through 1966 on all players signed before April 30, 1965, the dawn of the free-agent draft era.

The first-year player rule has cluttered major league rosters with green-pea talent, subjecting baseball to constant sharpshooting by pundits in and out of the game. The idea was to brake the bonus binge by forcing retention of expensive kids on major rosters.

Success of the measure was debatable at best. Its elimination this year is highly desirable for two reasons: It should clear 1966 roster space for bonafide major league talent and it will permit many first-year prospects to receive minor league training now denied them.

## HIGH DRAMA—PLAYED BY LESSER LIGHTS

Some of baseball's most glamorous names grace the Dodger roster—Sandy Koufax, Don Drysdale, Maury Wills. Yet it's not always the stars who provide the drama. Fiction writers wouldn't dare concoct a plot like the one spun recently by three Dodger lesser lights. It's too improbable.

Lou Johnson, Jim Gilliam and Don LeJohn did what every kid dreams of doing. They delivered the goods under the spotlight after being snatched from oblivion.

This is old hat to Gilliam, the alleged utilityman who never has failed to play well over 100 games every year since he made his Dodger debut in 1953. This year, they were so sure they wouldn't need Jim as a player that they made him a coach. At last look, Gilliam was an ex-coach and one of the Dodgers' most effective hitters.

Jim is 36, doing what he has done so many times—saving the Dodgers' bacon.

Where could you find two more implausible heroes than Johnson and LeJohn? Neither will ever see 30 again, and LeJohn never had played in a big league game until the disabled Dodgers called him up in desperation. Johnson had spent almost 13 years in the minors—with 18 clubs.

LeJohn had "found his level" in Double-A ball. His credentials showed only one year of Triple-A competition, 11 in Double-A or lower.

Though neither was able to escape the injuries which have hobbled the Dodgers, each came through handsomely when the club was on the verge of a sinking spell.

These two are not made of sugar candy. The faint of heart do not spend 12 years in the minor leagues. Having lived with adversity, they are not about to ease up after one whiff of success. We suspect the Dodgers knew their men when they called on this pair for help with a rough road ahead.

And don't let anyone tell you there's no romance in baseball.

## N. L. OCCUPIES THE DRIVER'S SEAT

It took the National League 32 years to gain the upper hand in All-Star competition. Judging from recent results, however, one must conclude the N. L. is planning a long reign to compensate for its extended doormat role.

Three victories in a row and seven in the last eight games attest to the power of the N. L. recovery drive, spearheaded by Stan Musial, Maury Wills, Johnny Callison and the magnificent Willie Mays, among others. Sixteen years ago, the American League enjoyed a 12-4 advantage. To the credit of N. L. players, they never let that huge deficit unnerve them. In fact, it seemed to goad them to superlative achievement.

The National League's 1965 All-Star victory climaxed a brilliant comeback which saved the midsummer spectacle from a competitive standpoint. Had A. L. domination continued, the All-Star Game probably would have lost some of the glitter it has generated for years.

Now the American League finds itself on the same uncomfortable spot the N. L. once occupied. Perhaps one game proves nothing, but seven defeats in eight tries do nothing for A. L. prestige. At any rate, the A. L. has striking evidence that the tables can be turned. The enemy provided that.

Meanwhile, visitors at the 1965 All-Star Game long will remember Minnesota as a marvelous host. From Governor Karl F. Roylaag on down, citizens of the north country zealously guarded their reputation for hospitality. Banquet tables were heaped with the choicest products of Minnesota agriculture, and the state's business leaders made sure the visitors lacked for nothing in creature comforts.

Best of all, the Twin Cities' Metropolitan Stadium contained a capacity crowd for the game. Minnesota fans may not have enjoyed the outcome, but there were no dull moments.

### WE BELIEVE

By C. C. JOHNSON SPINK  
Editor and Publisher

## Int Strongholds Teetering ST. LOUIS, Mo.

The proud International League, founded way back in 1884, has stood as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar through the years. Recently, however, there have been rumblings indicating that several cities in this stronghold of the minors are teetering badly.

Buffalo, long one of the league's bastions, appears in serious trouble. Burdened by a hapless cellar team, the Bisons have drawn so poorly that some observers feared the club might be bankrupt by season's end.

To help curb expenses, the Bisons dismissed Business Manager Jim Newton and have asked the fans to return baseballs hit into the stands.

In Toronto early this month, it was revealed in the club's stockholders' meeting that the Maple Leafs lost \$168,000 in 1964. The directors personally picked up the tab, but to complicate matters, the Leafs' leading financial angel, Percy Gardiner, died the other week. Reportedly he had written a check to cover \$100,000 of last year's deficit.

## Weather Atrocious, Says Sisler

In several other International League cities—notably Rochester, Jacksonville, Columbus and Toledo—attendance is considerably under expectations.

For the past three years, Rochester led all minor league clubs in the U. S. at the turnstiles, drawing approximately 272,000 each season. This year, the Red Wing gate was close to 50,000 behind the '64 pace at the halfway mark.

Some skeptics have viewed the International League's present predicament as forecasting the demise of the minors. George Sisler, Rochester general manager, doesn't share this view.

"What has hurt our league this year is the weather," commented Sisler. "It's been atrocious throughout the entire league. For example, here in Rochester we had good weather on only eight of our first 35 openings and fair weather on three others. The rest of the time it was cold or rainy."

"If we had enjoyed good weather and done as poorly, I'd be worried. But on the few occasions when we've had good weather and made a good showing, I've seen the same interest as in past years."

## Profits Can't Sustain Losses

However, he admits the Triple-A leagues face trouble unless additional steps are taken to assist them.

"In our good years, we (the minors) can't make enough to sustain us in our bad years," he said.

"The player development contract, as revised last winter, channels more money our way and cuts our expenses. But there are two or three areas where improvement is needed."

"For instance, the time has come when we can no longer afford to pay over \$700 per month for any player or to pay any of the manager's salary."

Under the player development contract, the parent major league club picks up the tab for everything over \$700 per month of each farmhand's salary and the manager's full salary if it selects him. However, the Triple-A club must pay the entire salary of any player whose contract it owns and \$7,500 of the manager's salary if it appoints him.

Generally, the players owned by

# Clouting 'Em

... With Joe King



## Mrs. Haynes Willing to Give Yanks Full Credit MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.

Fans here were so thrilled, so gay, so enthusiastic, so enraptured over the parade of the All-Stars into town that a fellow could wish they make the World Series also. A fellow, that is, who does not hail from Detroit, Baltimore, Chicago or Cleveland. . . . A bow to Mrs. Thelma Griffith Haynes of the Senators, who would rather beat the Yankees at their best than in their tormented condition this season. There are sportsmen throughout baseball who share Mrs. Haynes' sentiments. As the opposite of the "Yankee hater," these fair-minded persons respect the Yankees for their great tradition of winning, no matter how strongly they root against the



CHARLIE DRESSEN  
... Good Copy

RICK FERRELL  
... Knuckler Staff

WILLIE MAYS  
... Homecoming

CLYDE KING  
... First Aid

Bombers. "When I visit New York and some one speaks against the Yankees," says Mrs. Haynes, "I make the point clear that I feel the Yankees have earned everything they have gained." . . . They do things big, in Bunyanesque fashion here. Although monster walleyed pike were being caught in the state of Minnesota, the Twins physician, Russell Wright, went all the way up to the Arctic Circle to pursue his angling. . . . It's nothing to hear a chap speak of going off for a week's fishing or hunting in a spot accessible only by plane.

Almost everybody in and out of baseball tells a Charlie Dressen story. . . . There was a dandy about Brooklyn Dodger days. Clyde King was brought in hurriedly to relieve and Dressen sought to give him a little more time on the mound to warm up. Charlie told Pee Wee Reese to make believe he had dust in his eye when King came on. Pee Wee did and Jackie Robinson rushed to his aid. Unfortunately, so did King. The considerate pitcher put his glove down on the mound with the ball in it and joined the first-aid detail. . . . Did you know Dressen once had the Illinois varsity football team on his side, without ever attending Illinois? This is one of his football specials out of his life of the widest variety. In early pro days, Chuck was quarterback for the Taylorville, Ill., town team in 1919, and he led his side to a 42-0 conquest over nearby Carlinville. "They challenged us," Dressen recalls, "and we got a tip that they were bringing in ringers. What they were getting was nothing less than the Notre Dame varsity, when Buck Shaw was on the team. We had to do something fast, so we imported the Illinois varsity and we won, 6-0." . . . Dressen scored the only touchdown, and Illinois didn't take over until the second half, to help hold the famous Notre Damers scoreless. . . . College stars played with the pros on Sundays in those times, under assumed names, Dressen noted. . . . Billy Sullivan, head of the Boston Stadium Authority, points out that the new covered arena for the Red Sox and the football Patriots will have the ritzy Astrodome-type suites on the first tier rather than up next to heaven, as is the case in Texas.

## Ferrell Caught Quartet of Knuckleballers

Seeing Bobby Tiefenauer pitch his knuckleball carried Rick Ferrell back in memory to his palmy days, when he caught a whole staff of flutterball pitchers with the 1945 Washington Senators that finished second. . . . The starting rotation was Roger Wolff (20-10), Dutch Leonard (17-7), Mickey Haefner (16-14) and Johnny Niggeling (7-12). "I could see those four in my sleep," Ferrell stated, "and I often would wake up feeling that I had been shadow boxing with those cantankerous knucklers." The four Senators all used different grips, according to Rick. "Niggeling, who had the biggest breaking knuckler," Ferrell explained, "pitched with one finger bent under. Leonard had two fingers folded in and Wolf with three fingers. Haefner was the lefthander in the lot." In that season, Ferrell was charged with 21 passed balls in 83 games, and his reserve catchers, Mike Guerra and Al Evans, had 19 between them. Ferrell rated Hoyt Wilhelm as the knuckleball pitcher with the most control. In 1954, Wes Westrum had a miraculous time catching Wilhelm with the New York Giants, because he was charged with only three passed balls in 98 games. Gut Triandos at Baltimore had 28 passed balls, a modern record, when Wilhelm was an Oriole. Ray Katt of the Giants set a record with four passed balls in an inning when he contended with Wilhelm in 1954. . . . A funny thing about Willie Mays, Minneapolis could claim that the great outfielder "returned" for the All-Star Game. In 1951, Willie did play with the Giant farm club, the Millers, for just 35 games, but they ought to remember the Say-Hey Kid hereabouts. Willie hit .477 as a Miller. When Horace Stoneham brought him up to the Giants, the owner took ads in Minneapolis newspapers to explain the necessity of "stealing" a star.

minor league clubs are older performers who are signed because of their greater experience.

"While the majors are interested only in youngsters with big league potential, I'm sure they would want to develop their prospects alongside these better, more experienced players," Sisler said.

As to predictions that the minors are doomed, the Rochester G. M.

said it's been proved that the minors "are the only sensible way to develop talent for the majors" and added that he feels the majors need more, not fewer, leagues.

"If the free-agent draft enables them to save money by getting out of the dogfight that raised bonuses, I'm sure they (major league club owners) will see they need additional leagues to develop talent."