

**DRUGS from C1***Offer called  
'significant'*<sup>NI</sup>

The management negotiating team sounded elated at receiving the proposal.

"In terms of the history of the relationship on this topic and the union's position on it, I would characterize this as a very significant proposal," said Rob Manfred, the clubs' chief labor lawyer. The union's willingness to accept unannounced testing, he added, "is a very significant move."

Saying the use of illegal steroids has been an issue of "great concern to us," Manfred added in a conference call with reporters: "Frankly we're quite pleased that the union made a forthcoming proposal in this area. We're hopeful it will put us on a path that will lead to an agreement on this topic."

The management negotiators viewed the union's move as so positive that Manfred said they might make a counterproposal at today's bargaining session.

The union proposal, some details of which the union disclosed in a news release, calls for testing in a two-stage process. The first stage would cover the next two seasons, 2003 and 2004, during which testing would be done for survey purposes only. Beginning next season, all players would be tested one or more times as a means of determining the extent of steroid use. If those results show an insignificant use of steroids, a second survey would be conducted in 2004 to see whether those results supported the first survey.

If either survey shows a significant amount of steroid use, which the union defines as more than 5 percent of the players, the plan would enter its second stage. A program of random, unannounced testing would be put in place for two years.

Denny Hocking, the Twins' union representative, said the steroid issue was stalling progress on issues such as revenue sharing and luxury taxes on payrolls.

"It shows a positive sign to the fans that we are trying to have movement in these negotiations to get it resolved before we have to come to that sword," Hocking said. "Just like in tennis, we just served and the ball is in their court."

Twins reliever Eddie Guardado said testing needs to be done to protect the integrity of the sport.

"Just to get things cleared up," he said. "If you're not doing it, you've got nothing to hide."

— *Staff Writer La Velle E. Neal III contributed to this report.*