

myBaseball:

By Bob Pladek

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With the threat of yet another baseball strike looming, I decided it was time to present the solution to the crisis. If there is ANY justice in the world, MLB and the Players Union will throw a few million shekels my way. Since I'm about to save their collective unbargaining butts.

Here it is. The way to FIX BASEBALL. In 619 words.

PROBLEM: Huge disparity in salaries = huge disparity in talent = huge disparity in competition = huge disparity in attendance = huge disparity in revenue = huge disparity in salaries.

You get the point.

The rich teams are paying some small penalty to the poor/poorer teams for the privilege: not enough to matter, just enough to ensure that there aren't only 2 teams with a chance to win by July 1. Owners, it turns out, don't want to part with profit\$ any more than player\$ want to. Everybody wants to get rich: consequently, few do.

NOW. Accept the following as premises:

Owners want the new system to ensure they make as much money as they did in the old system with the opportunity to make MORE;

Players want the new system to ensure there are as many salary dollars available as there were in the old system, with the opportunity to make MORE;

SOLUTION:

Here's the deal. Pretend the owners and players already agreed to it for BB Year 2002. This is what they agreed

to:

PART I

Total salary dollars for Baseball Year 2000 and 2001 will be compiled;

These total dollars will be divided by the number of teams;

Each team will be required to spend that much, but no more, on salaries for 2002 (maybe with some uniform, across-the-team raise of 5%/yr);

Those teams that spent MORE than that averaged amount in 2001 will be required to put those extra dollars into a player-salary pool;

Those teams that spent LESS than that averaged amount in 2001 can utilize the player-salary pool amounts to meet the average-salary requirement;

PART II

"Profit" will be defined as total revenue, by team, minus player salaries only;

Profit for each team during Baseball Year 2000 and 2001 will be computed; if they lost money under this formula, they aren't going to MAKE it with the player-salary pool dollars. THOSE HAVE TO BE SPENT ON SALARIES.

Whatever "Profit" a team DID make over the average of those two years will be GUARANTEED for 2002.

PART III

The system will keep rolling along. Each team can do its own marketing, and must, to increase its revenue and create PROFIT. No team will be able to use ANOTHER Team's "Profit" for its OWN profit.

That, my friends, is IT. You can tinker some if you like, especially as it concerns existing mega-player salaries over their contract periods, but keep the essentials: ANY TEAM THAT MADE MONEY WILL BE GUARANTEED TO MAKE THE SAME MONEY; EVERY TEAM WILL PAY THE SAME PLAYER SALARIES. The incentive to make MORE money, by team, is there, because THAT becomes the standard for the NEXT year. Local t.v. contracts matter, because that profit remains local. Any team that makes more gets to keep more.

George Steinbrenner, the businessman, shouldn't care at the end of the fiscal year where salary dollars are spent, so long as he is making the same (or more) profit. He should care even LESS because the GAME will be competitive again, thereby increasing, overall, baseball revenue. Teams that lose money will have no incentive to lose more money; because the GAME is

competitive again, it should be easier for them TO make money.

Mega-salary players, of which there are actually very few, will be specially handled. The system will not be perfect for several years, but in several years it WILL be darn close. As a union, players cannot complain because their overall membership will be getting the same or more dollars, since competition will increase attendance will increase revenue.

Its past time to fix our national pastime. Just DO it.

C'mon guys: play BALL.

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