

Owners take steps at meetings

NEW YORK (AP) — Four days before the strike deadline, baseball players and owners were taking tiny steps toward each other.

A day after criticizing players, owners made a new economic proposal that moved toward the union in an effort to head off a strike later this week.

Owners raised their thresholds for a luxury tax and lowered their proposed tax rates, and also slightly decreased the amount of local revenue they want teams to share.

They also made a new proposal on testing for steroid use, where the sides remain apart on details.

The baseball players union has set a strike date for Friday if their demand are not met.

A strike could wipe out the post-season, including the World Series.

Baseball recovered from the last work stoppage, but experts fear fans will not return to the game as quickly again.

baseball scores

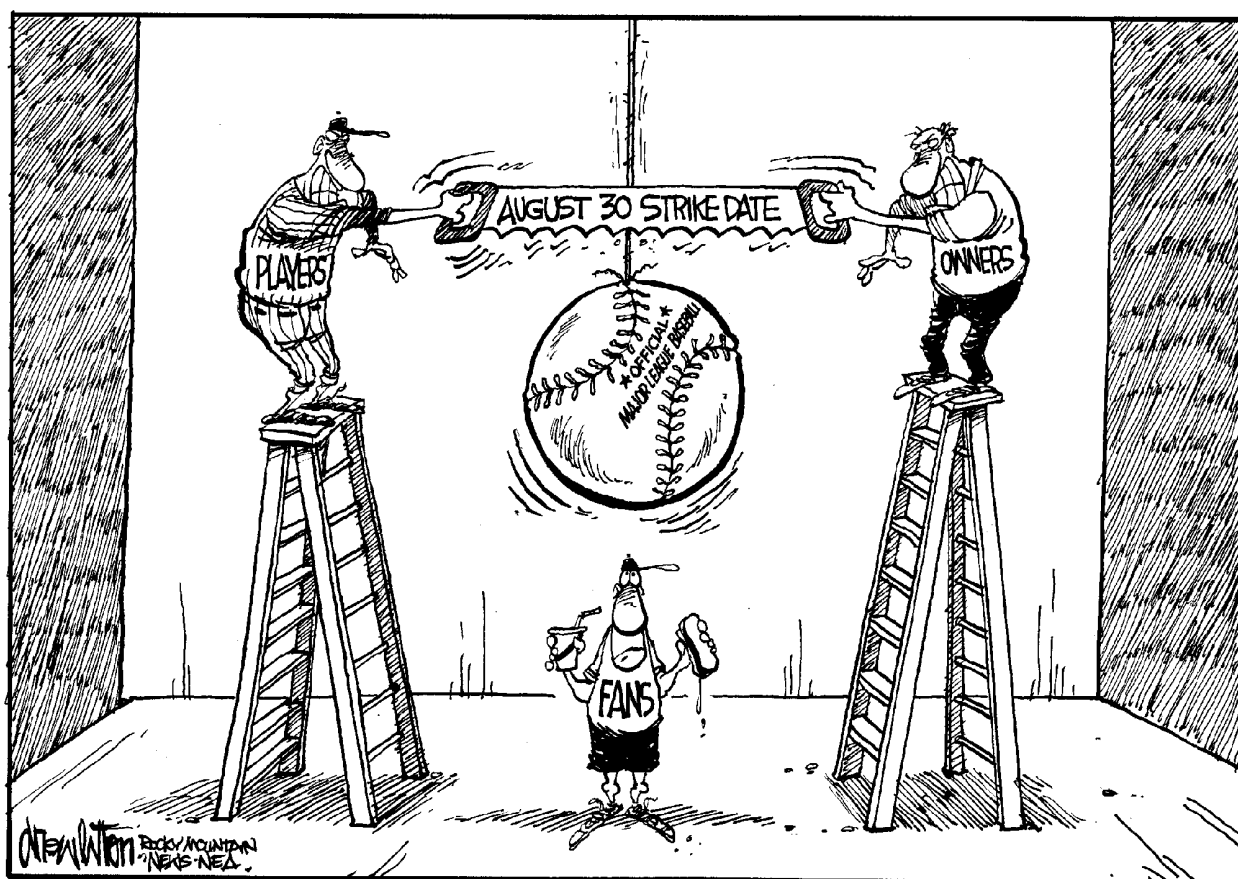
By the Associated Press

NATIONAL LEAGUE				
East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Atlanta	82	47	.636	—
Montreal	65	65	.500	17 1/2
Philadelphia	64	65	.496	18
Florida	63	67	.485	19 1/2
New York	60	69	.465	22
Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
St. Louis	71	57	.555	—
Houston	69	61	.531	3
Cincinnati	64	65	.496	7 1/2
Pittsburgh	58	73	.443	14 1/2
Chicago	54	74	.422	17
Milwaukee	44	85	.341	27 1/2
West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Arizona	83	47	.638	—
Los Angeles	75	55	.577	8
San Francisco	71	58	.550	11 1/2
Colorado	61	69	.469	22
San Diego	55	75	.423	28

Saturday's Games	
Cincinnati 5, Houston 3, 11 innings	
Montreal 7, San Francisco 2	
Los Angeles 4, Atlanta 3	
Chicago Cubs 4, Arizona 0	
Pittsburgh 17, Milwaukee 10	
N.Y. Mets 5, Colorado 2	
Philadelphia 4, St. Louis 0	
Florida 8, San Diego 4	
Sunday's Games	
Pittsburgh 3, Milwaukee 2	
Philadelphia 5, St. Louis 3	
Houston 1, Cincinnati 0	
N.Y. Mets 7, Colorado 4	
San Francisco 8, Montreal 4	
Arizona 7, Chicago Cubs 0	
Florida 7, San Diego 6	
Atlanta 7, Los Angeles 5	

Today's Games	
Chicago Cubs (Prior 6-4) at Milwaukee (Sheets 7-15), 6:05 p.m.	
San Francisco (Rueter 11-7) at Colorado (Cook 0-0), 7:05 p.m.	
Arizona (Schilling 21-4) at Los Angeles (Daal 10-6), 8:10 p.m.	
Tuesday's Games	
St. Louis at Cincinnati, 11:10 a.m., 1st game	
Atlanta at Pittsburgh, 5:05 p.m.	
N.Y. Mets at Florida, 5:05 p.m.	
Montreal at Philadelphia, 5:05 p.m.	
St. Louis at Cincinnati, 5:10 p.m., 2nd game	
Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee, 6:05 p.m.	
San Diego at Houston, 6:05 p.m.	
San Francisco (Jensen 11-8) at Colorado (Stark 9-3), 7:05 p.m.	
Arizona at Los Angeles, 8:10 p.m.	

AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
New York	80	48	.625	—
Boston	73	55	.570	7
Baltimore	63	66	.488	17 1/2
Toronto	56	73	.434	24 1/2
Tampa Bay	43	87	.331	38
Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	78	54	.591	—
Chicago	61	69	.469	16
Cleveland	56	73	.434	20 1/2
Kansas City	53	78	.405	24 1/2
Detroit	49	81	.377	28
West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Oakland	80	51	.611	—
Anaheim	77	52	.597	2
Seattle	78	53	.595	2
Texas	57	71	.445	21 1/2
Saturday's Games				
Cleveland 5, Seattle 3				
Anaheim 2, Boston 0				
Toronto 4, Baltimore 1, 1st game				
Toronto 8, Baltimore 3, 2nd game				
Minnesota 6, Kansas City 5				
N.Y. Yankees 3, Texas 2				
Oakland 12, Detroit 3				
Chicago White Sox 5, Tampa Bay 2				
Sunday's Games				
Anaheim 8, Boston 3				
Texas 6, N.Y. Yankees 2				
Seattle 12, Cleveland 4				
Toronto 5, Baltimore 2				
Oakland 10, Detroit 7				
Kansas City 4, Minnesota 2				
Chicago White Sox 8, Tampa Bay 3				
Today's Games				
Texas (Rogers 12-6) at N.Y. Yankees (O. Hernandez 6-3), 11:05 a.m.				
Anaheim (Ortiz 10-9) at Boston (Burkett 10-7), 5:05 p.m.				
Detroit (Sparks 8-12) at Cleveland (R. Rodriguez 0-1), 5:05 p.m.				
Oakland (Lidle 7-9) at Kansas City (May 3-8), 6:05 p.m.				
Toronto (Halladay 14-6) at Chicago White Sox (Parque 1-3), 6:05 p.m.				
Tuesday's Games				
N.Y. Yankees at Boston, 5:05 p.m.				
Detroit at Cleveland, 5:05 p.m.				
Seattle at Minnesota, 6:05 p.m.				
Baltimore at Texas, 6:05 p.m.				
Oakland at Kansas City, 6:05 p.m.				
Toronto at Chicago White Sox, 6:05 p.m.				
Tampa Bay at Anaheim, 8:05 p.m.				



Mets win two straight games

Alfonzo, recently off injured list, homers against Rockies

DENVER (AP) — Edgardo Alfonzo's value to the New York Mets is clear to manager Bobby Valentine.

"He's just a credible guy on our team that's better when we have him than when we don't," Valentine said Sunday. "He gives a good feel in our lineup."

Valentine can turn to the New York Mets' recent 12-game losing streak for proof. Alfonzo was on the disabled list during the losing skid. With him back, the Mets have won two straight.

Alfonzo homered and had three RBIs to lead Al Leiter and New York past the Colorado Rockies 7-4.

"It puts pressure on you because I don't want the team to go down because of me," Alfonzo said.

Raul Gonzalez added his first two career homers and drove in four runs. Acquired from Cincinnati on Aug. 15 in a trade for left-hander Shawn Estes, Gonzalez went 2-for-4 in his ninth major league start — fourth with the Mets.

The 28-year-old outfielder has played in 1,238 minor league games. He appeared in 10 games for the Reds this season before being sent down to Triple-A Louisville on July 22.

"There were times I never thought I would get a chance to play in the major leagues, let alone hit home runs," Alfonzo said. "The Reds were so

loaded in the outfield that they gave me little hope playing with them, or that I would be called up in September."

The teams traded beanballs in the ninth inning, leading to the ejection of Rockies reliever Kent Mercker, Mets pitcher David Weathers and both managers.

Alfonzo, who came off the DL Saturday, was 2-for-3 with a single and his 11th home run as the Mets handed Denny Neagle (7-8) his first loss in six starts.

Leiter (11-10) limited the Rockies to two runs and five hits through seven innings. He struck out eight and walked one.

"Leiter has had the better of us and has given us fits over the long haul," Colorado manager Clint Hurdle said.

"He pitched another good ballgame against us."

After Weathers was ejected for hitting Juan Uribe with a pitch, Armando Benitez got one out for his 29th save in 32 chances.

Neagle allowed four runs and six hits in 6 2-3 innings.

"I can't really hang my head with this outing," Neagle said. "For the most part I did my job, but made one too many bad pitches."

Mike Piazza doubled past third base leading off the fourth and Alfonzo homered to center. One out later,

Gonzalez hit a letter-high changeup into the seats in left.

"The home run was a dream come true, one that took a long time to happen," Gonzalez said. "But hitting home runs isn't me. They happen when they happen."

Colorado scored twice in its half on back-to-back doubles with one out by former Mets Jay Payton and Todd Zeile. New York made it 4-2 in the fifth on Alfonzo's two-out RBI single.

Gonzalez hit his second homer of the game, a three-run shot.

"I got a pretty good pitch because he thought I was going to bunt," Gonzalez said. "They had the bunt on and changed, and gave me the green light."

Gabe Kapler hit a two-run homer off Weathers in the ninth.

NEW YORK		METS 7, ROCKIES 4		COLORADO	
ab	r	h	bi	abr	h
Alomar 2	5	0	0	Shmpt 1	4
TPerez c	2	1	0	Merckr	0
Piazza 5	1	1	0	Fentes	0
Wthers	0	0	0	Butler 2	4
Benitez	0	0	0	Helton 1	4
Alfonzo 3	2	2	3	Payton c	4
SReed	0	0	0	Zeile 3	4
VWilson	0	0	0	Kapler r	3
Vlentin 1	3	1	0	SAlmr	4
RGNzlz l	4	2	2	Uribe s	3
McEwgr	4	0	2	Neagle	2
Ordnez s	4	0	0	Corey	0
Leiter	2	0	0	VSants	0
Trisco r	0	0	0	Pierre c	2
Totals	32	7	7	Totals	34

Injury sets back Chiefs' plans

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A frustrating training camp keeps getting worse for the Kansas City Chiefs.

Missing ever since camp opened is All-Pro tight end Tony Gonzalez, who wants more money and permission to continue to seek an NBA career. Missing also is much-needed first-round pick Ryan Sims, who also wants more money.

Those two, without many options, will probably join the team in a week or two. But now free safety Jerome Woods, a key member of the secondary since 1996, has broken his leg and is out for the year.

"It's a real setback," said coach Dick Vermeil.

The injury happened when Woods was trying to make a tackle on running back Shaun Alexander Saturday night

during the Chiefs' 17-14 exhibition loss in Seattle.

He hit the ground and immediately began writhing in pain, clutching his right leg.

"We lost more than a football game. We lost a fine safety tonight," Vermeil said.

"It hurts. He is our key guy back there. He's an experienced free safety in the scheme and the scheme is a very sophisticated, complicated scheme that requires him to do a lot of things."

Strong safety Greg Wesley was held out to rest a nagging shoulder injury that has bothered him during the pre-season.

A possible replacement for Woods is Jason Belser, a 10-year veteran who was slated to be backup at both safety positions. Belser, son of former Chiefs

linebacker Cesar Belser, spent his first nine seasons at Indianapolis.

"That would be the first thought, yes," Vermeil said.

Another possibility is Shaunard Harts, a seventh-round pick in 2001.

"You can't lose too many real good football players and remain competitive," Vermeil said.

"But it's been my experience that when you have a group of kids who work real hard there's always somebody who steps up and fills that void. I'm sure we have that kind of player on our roster. Fortunately for us, it's one of our stronger positions."

Quarterback Trent Green, who was intercepted three times in the first poor showing of the offense in three exhibition games, can sympathize with Woods.

West Nile found in Wallace County

WEST NILE, from Page 1

only three mosquitoes all summer, and he is not sure how the virus is spreading so fast.

It might be spread by infected birds flying west which are then bitten by a few insects, he said, or maybe mosquitoes are getting caught in wind patterns heading from eastern Kansas. It's even possible some flying pests are hitching rides in cars, he said.

"The pattern is pretty haphazard,"

Hopper said. "We don't know how it is getting around, we just know it is."

The disease could spread to Sherman County, he said, but the danger would be greater if the area had gotten more rain this summer.

"The drought has been horrible, and I hate to say this," Hopper said, "but if

you have to look for a silver lining, this is it. Mosquitoes have a hard time in dry climates."

Hopper said if people find dead birds they want to test for the virus they can call his office, or the Kansas State University research center at (866) 452-7810.

Rookie's fumbles hard on Broncos

By Bob Baum

The Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — The Denver Broncos dominated statistically but had to overcome four turnovers, three of them fumbles by rookie running back Clinton Portis, in a 19-13 pre-season victory over the Arizona Cardinals on Saturday night.

Two of Portis' fumbles led to Arizona's first 10 points. The third ended a long Broncos' drive at the Cardinals' 11-yard line.

Despite a huge advantage in total yards, Denver led only 13-10 when its first unit left the game late in the third quarter.

Brian Griese completed 22 of 32 passes for 227 yards, with no touchdowns and an interception.

The Broncos, who did not punt until 1:55 remained in the game, had a 253-74 yardage advantage at halftime but led just 13-10.

Along with three first-half turnovers, Denver failed to score on fourth-and-goal from the Arizona 1-yard line and missed a conversion kick.

Arizona strong safety Adrian Wilson left the game after dislocating his left shoulder while tackling Shannon Sharpe in the first quarter.

The Cardinals' Thomas Jones had his first encouraging performance of the pre-season, gaining 65 yards in 20 carries, including a 5-yard touchdown run. Jake Plummer completed 8 of 16 passes for 73 yards.

Arizona's Kwamie Lassiter scooped up Portis' second fumble and returned it 11 yards to the Denver 5-yard line with 2:36 to play in the half. On the next play, Jones burst up the middle for the

touchdown to put Arizona ahead 10-7.

Griese completed eight of 10 passes in a 13-play, 74-yard drive in the final 2:13 of the half. Mike Anderson scored on a 2-yard run to put Denver up 13-10 with seven seconds remaining. With kicker Jason Elam out with a strained right hamstring, Ola Kimron missed the extra point.

Portis fumbled on the Broncos' first possession and Arizona's Ray Thompson recovered at the Denver 49. Arizona drove to the eight, and Bill Gramatica kicked a 25-yard field goal.

It was Gramatica's first field goal since he went down with a season-ending knee injury jumping for joy following a routine field goal last Dec. 15 against the New York Giants. This time, Gramatica simply exchanged high-fives with his teammates.

Denver took the subsequent kickoff and drove 70 yards to the Arizona 1, but on fourth-and-goal, Olandis Gary was stopped for no gain.

The Broncos went 80 yards in 13 plays — all but three of them on the ground — with Gary scoring on a 2-yard run to put Denver ahead 7-3 with 7:06 to play in the half.

Ed McCaffrey caught a 13-yard pass during the drive, his first reception since breaking both bones in his lower left leg in last season's opener against the Giants.

Rookie Kelly Herndon intercepted backup Chris Griesen's pass and returned it 25 yards for a touchdown to put Denver ahead 19-10 with 11:54 remaining in the game.

Gramatica's backup, rookie Tim Duncan, kicked a 49-yard field goal to cut the lead to 19-13 with 9:03 to play.

Struggling pitcher a good investment

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Kansas City Royals say Miguel Asencio is a good investment, despite his mediocre stats.

Asencio, 1-4 with a 5.56 ERA in his previous 12 starts dating to June 9, pitched seven strong innings to lead the Royals to a 4-2 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Sunday.

In 26 games this year — including 16 starts — Asencio is 3-4 with a 5.34 ERA.

But consider where he has been in the past and where the Royals project he will be when he comes around and finds his groove.

Asencio, 21, pitched last year with Single-A Clearwater and was 12-5 with a 2.84 ERA. Then, the Royals plucked him in the Rule 5 draft from the Philadelphia Phillies in December.

"In three, four, five years, he could be battling for a Cy Young," said Roberto Hernandez, who pitched the ninth for his 24th save in 31 chances.

"He's got the makeup to do that."

"He's got a tremendous changeup, a good live arm. Once he learns to make his slider a little bit better, he's going to be tough to beat."

Asencio held the Twins hitless until the fourth and lost his shutout in the seventh when Dustin Mohr hit a two-run homer.

He allowed two runs on five hits, walked two and struck out four in matching his longest outing of the year.

"This is my best start of the season," Asencio said. "This is the best team I've faced. I did a great job today. I worked the first pitch for a strike the first two innings."

Cardinals swept at home

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Rookie Brett Myers shut down the St. Louis Cardinals in a 5-3 win Sunday and the Philadelphia Phillies completed a sweep at Busch Stadium for the first time since 1990.

"I want to enjoy this, and I want us to get to .500," said Myers, who didn't get the victory but allowed only two runs in 6 1-3 innings.

The Phillies closed to within a game of .500 at 64-65 for the first time since early April, and want to get even before

the players' strike looming Friday.

"We can't do anything about the labor situation, all we can do is try to win our games," Phillies manager Larry Bowa said.

"When you look at the hole we started in, we've come a long way."

The same team which started off 8-18 and struggled to recover, impressed Bowa by sweeping the Central-leading Cardinals at Busch Stadium.

"I remember how tough it was to win here when I was a player," he said.

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