

All-Star game changes going to be up to players

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Now it's up to baseball players to decide if the All-Star game winner gets home-field advantage in the World Series.

Owners unanimously approved the change Thursday as their two-day meeting ended.

"This energizes it. This gives them something to really play for," commissioner Bud Selig said after the 30-0 vote. "People pay a lot of money to see that game. They deserve to see the same intensity they see all year long. Television people pay a lot of money for the game. It was not and should not be a meaningless exhibition game."

Home field has rotated between the American and National leagues since the World Series began in 1903, and the team hosting Games 1, 2, 6 and 7 has won 15 of the last 17 titles and the last eight Series that went a full seven games.

Owners made the change following last year's mess in Milwaukee, when both teams ran out of pitchers and the All-Star game ended in a 7-7, 11-inning tie. Management officials say Fox, which holds baseball's television rights, was strongly in favor of the proposal.

Some players have voiced opposition.

"That's crazy. You've got the All-Star game with players from different teams. I don't think that's right," said Chicago White Sox catcher Sandy Alomar Jr., a six-time All-Star. "That's totally ludicrous."

Alomar was MVP of the 1997

All-Star game at Cleveland, and was a member of the Indians team that lost Game 7 of that year's World Series at Florida — which would have been played at Jacobs Field under the new rule.

The union said it's not sure of its stance, but it appears management and Fox has work ahead to convince players to accept the change.

"We appreciate what they're trying to do," said Gene Orza, the union's No. 2 official. "We'll talk to the players and get a more widespread reaction than we've gotten so far. We'll also talk to the networks. It's not problem-free, but nothing in this sport is."

Management can't understand any opposition.

"Their arguments are kind of hollow, whatever they are," Arizona owner Jerry Colangelo said.

Selig also will have his staff direct the All-Star managers to keep players in reserve in case the game goes extra innings and urge them to keep starting pitchers in the game longer.

"In the last few years, it's basically been an exhibition game," Los Angeles Dodgers chairman Bob Daly said. "That isn't the way I grew up watching the game."

Some players don't want the game to have more importance. Boston's Johnny Damon thinks forcing players to put more importance on the game would cause more to turn down invitations.

"You're going to see guys reject it even more. They won't take a

chance of injuring themselves for a game that's for the league," he said. "Imagine if Nomar (Garcia) goes there and he gets hurt?"

In other news, baseball's committee on the future of the Montreal Expos will start contacting communities interested in acquiring the team to set up meetings. Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia and Portland, Ore., are the leading candidates to obtain the franchise, which is among the poorest draws in the major leagues.

On other topics:

— Selig will issue a directive establishing 14 as the minimum age for batboys, a move that takes away the job of 3-year-old Darren Baker, who nearly got into a collision during the World Series.

— Sandy Alderson, Selig's executive vice president of baseball operations, said baseball will push speedup initiatives designed to lower the average time of a nine-game game to 2 hours, 45 minutes. It was 2:52 last year, down six minutes from 2000.

— Selig appointed the first 15 members of his marketing task force, a group that includes former NL president Len Coleman, Orza, Daly, News Corp. chairman Peter Chernin, ESPN president George Bodenheimer, John Hancock Financial Services Inc. chairman David D'Alessandro, former NFL marketing head Sara Levinson, columnist George Will and former San Francisco general manager Al Rosen.

Is it going to go in?



Lindsey Shields and Emily Murray watched to see the outcome of a jumpshot by Oberlin during Thursday's game. The eighth grade Mustangs played at Oberlin, besting the Red Devils 53-21.

Photo by Brad Larson/The Oberlin Herald

Colorado Avalanche lose to biggest rival, Red Wings, 4-2

DENVER (AP) — Colorado's Adam Foote had a decision to make: skate off the ice or touch the puck and take a penalty for too many men on the ice.

He chose to leave the ice and it cost the Avalanche another loss to their biggest rival.

Brendan Shanahan scored two goals in the third period, including the winner after Foote went off, as the Detroit Red Wings beat the Avalanche 4-2 Thursday night.

"It's one of those things where I'm right at the bench, I have to come off," Foote said. "I wanted to touch it, but I couldn't."

The play started when Joe Sakic dumped the puck toward Foote in Colorado's zone late in the third. Foote had already been replaced by Greg de Vries, but was still on the ice near the door to Colorado's

bench.

He thought about touching the puck to prevent Shanahan from getting it, but figured he would be called for a penalty and let the puck bounce off the boards near his skate.

Shanahan then swooped in and beat Patrick Roy to the far post with 7:18 left, giving Detroit its third straight win in the rivalry.

"I had a split second to make that decision," Foote said. "When you see a guy coming down and you have two guys back, you've got to assume that nothing like that is going to happen. If I take the penalty, then they say you have to know better."

Foote's decision marred a game that was nearly as exciting as last year's Western Conference finals.

Despite new coaches and plenty of new players, the teams showed a

strong dislike for each other.

The players were pushing and shoving for most of the night and several fights nearly broke out.

Colorado newcomer Serge Aubin put his mark on the rivalry by driving Sean Avery head-first into the boards in the second, and the period ended with a skirmish that had players lingering on the ice for about a minute.

Colorado's crowd, which has been uncharacteristically quiet this season, even seemed to perk up with the return of the hated Red Wings.

The fans booed Detroit's players during introductions and started a chant of "Let's go Avalanche!" in the first two minutes.

As in the conference finals, which lasted seven games, it ended with a Detroit victory.

"This game had a lot of buildup

to it. It was a small task, but a small task that we passed," Detroit goalie Curtis Joseph said. "You could tell by the way the game was played and by the intensity that it meant more than two points."

Joseph was new to the rivalry, but he did a good job of following the example set by Detroit goalies Chris Osgood and Dominik Hasek before him.

He opened the game by gloving a wrister by Alex Tanguay after some nifty passing by the Avalanche, then stopped consecutive slap shots by Rob Blake and Derek Morris during a power play.

In the second, Joseph stopped a hard shot by Joe Sakic from the right circle and later gloved another one from nearly the same spot. He also made a tough glove save on a shot by Sakic in the closing minutes, one

of 36 on the night.

"Our first game against Colorado and he was looking forward to this game," said Shanahan, who added an empty-net goal with 1:06 left to play.

"This is a big part of why we signed him, to play in games like this and go head-to-head against guys like Patrick. And he rose to the occasion."

Tournament sign-up begins

Mid America Youth Basketball will be holding two tournaments in the area for boys and girls in grades 4 through 8.

The first will be in Garden City on Feb. 22 and 23. There is a three-game guarantee and teams must be registered by Friday, Feb. 7. The second will be in Hays on March 1 and 2. It also has a three-game guarantee and teams must be registered by Friday, Feb. 14.

To register, call the national office at (316) 284-0354 or send emails to mayb@mayb.com, or call the tournament directors. For the Garden City tourney, call (620) 355-7368, and for the Hays tourney call (785) 623-2650.

Conley registers for classes and joins Missouri

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — When Jason Conley was considering transferring from Virginia Military Institute, he turned on his TV to watch basketball. Missouri, which was playing Iowa on ESPN, ended up the beneficiary.

Conley, who became the first freshman to lead the nation in scoring last season with a 29.3-point average, registered for classes Thursday at Missouri.

"They just so happened to be on TV," Conley said. "The next thing you know, I get my release and I get a call from them. I really did like the

way they played and I loved the place when I visited."

The 6-5 Conley was an AP honorable mention All-American last season, also tying for third in the Southern Conference with eight rebounds per game. Conley attended Missouri's practice Thursday, but coach Quin Snyder said he won't participate until he gets medical clearance. At VMI, Conley scored 30 or more points in 12 games last season. He also played well against top-notch teams, scoring 38 points against Villanova, 25 against Virginia and 24 against Kentucky.

"I love playing that competition, and that's great because I can play that every game here, and every day in practice," Conley said.

Missouri added a new player soon after they lost one. On Sunday, sophomore Najeeb Echols decided to transfer and has since enrolled at Illinois State.

The loss of Echols leaves Snyder with just nine scholarship players, including former walk-on Ryan Kiernan, who averages two minutes a game. Snyder said Conley will be useful in practice during the NCAA-mandated year he must sit

out as a transfer.

"The biggest thing right now is to have another player out there, a guy we really have to guard," Snyder said. "I think a lot of times when you're thin and when you're undermanned, you can build some bad habits in practice by letting down in certain situations."

recreation results

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Century Feeders over Killa B's 15-6, 15-4
Duell Farms over Killa B's 15-11, 15-7
American Family Insurance over First National Bank 15-4, 15-3
Alex's Radiator & Repair over Scared Hitless 16-14, 16-14
ADM-Collingwood Grain over Alex's Radiator & Repair 15-3, 15-4
American Family Insurance over First National Bank 15-4, 15-4
ADM-Collingwood Grain over First National Bank 15-3, 15-2
Century Feeders over Scared Hitless 15-11, 15-7
Pirate Electric/Brewster Frontier Equity over Duell Farms 15-9, 15-6
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