

Pool concept may be key to solving baseball's ills

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal mediator Kenneth Moffett has summoned management and the players union back to the negotiating table, with a decision due as early as today from a federal judge on a request for an injunction against major league baseball.

"I'm not as pessimistic as I was last week," Moffett said, setting more talks today at 11 a.m. PDT. "I'm not saying I see the light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe I'm just getting a second wind."

Or maybe a proposal by the union, establishing a pool to supply teams with professional compensation for free-agent losses, has given Moffett reason to hope for a breakthrough.

The proposal was rejected by management Saturday, but "not summarily," according to Ray Grebey, director of baseball's Player Relations Committee.

"There are certain conceptual elements of irreconcilable differences," Grebey said. "It doesn't provide the basis for agreement. What they came up with offers no framework for settlement. We'll keep trying."

Marvin Miller, executive director of the Major League Players Association, thinks the owners' opposition is that the plan advanced by the union does not penalize teams signing free agents.

"The owners' argument for compensation has been, you've got to fill the hole left by free agents leaving their teams," said Miller. "We've tried to accommodate them from this standpoint."

"The hole is there as soon as a free agent

declares he is leaving a club. Therefore, there is no rational basis for filling that hole from the club signing the free agent.

"If this is an industry problem, it should be solved on an industry basis. That's what the pool concept suggests."

But management's position is that a pool with all teams contributing players would be unfair to the teams which do not sign free agents. The union plan would limit pool losses to no more than one player per team and would attach a payment of either \$20,000 or \$40,000 for each selection, depending on team standings.

Miller said the owners' negotiators were opposed to the concept.

"They had some questions but no new ideas of their own," he said. "Their objection is that it's not their format of requiring the signing club to lose something of value. It's not good enough just to fill the hole. They're saying it must be filled from the signing club."

"Their proposal, at the core, is to punish teams signing free agents. It's a tax, a cost."

The union proposal eliminates that cost.

Meanwhile, both sides await U.S. District Judge Henry Werker's decision. If the judge supports the National Labor Relations Board's request and issues the injunction, the matter would be put off for another year. If, however, he refuses to issue it, the players have said they would strike within 48 hours.

Velasquez takes flak for Belmont ride

NEW YORK (AP) — Luis Barrera quietly accepted congratulations Sunday over Summing's upset victory in the Belmont Stakes, while the loss that cost Pleasant Colony the Triple Crown didn't keep John Campo from talking.

Both trainers agreed that a key reason for Summing's victory in the 1½-mile Belmont on Saturday was the performance of George Martens.

"Martens probably rode the best race of his life," said Campo of the 22-year-old jockey who sent Summing to the lead

after a slow first mile, opening a four-length lead over Highland Blade and a 4½-length margin over Pleasant Colony with a quarter-mile remaining.

Summing's margin in a time of 2:29 was a neck over Highland Blade, with Pleasant Colony 1½ lengths back.

Pleasant Colony was last after the first half mile, then sixth with a half mile to go. He began to move on the turn, but Martens, as Campo and Barrera said, "had a handful of horse," and he widened his lead on Summing.

"I only train the horse," Campo said. "Jorge rode the race to the best of his ability. He's a great rider."

But Campo said he felt owner Thomas Mellon Evans might take Velasquez off the horse. He also said he would put an apprentice on the colt before he would let him fall victim to a slow pace again.

"He (Velasquez) is going to get blamed a whole lot. I feel sorry for him," said Campo, adding: "You can't second guess anybody. I'm not an excuse trainer."

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