



Giants release slugger for violation

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Darryl Strawberry's second chance is over.

On Monday, the San Francisco Giants' troubled outfielder was suspended for 60 days for violating major-league baseball's drug policy and terms of his aftercare program. The Giants followed suit by ending Strawberry's 29-game career with the team.

The Giants, who gave Strawberry a reprieve after the Los Angeles Dodgers released him early last season, told him last June that "any violation of this nature" wouldn't be tolerated, said general manager Bob Quinn.

"We are deeply saddened by today's news," Quinn said in a prepared statement. "Over the past nine months, we have come to know Darryl not only as a baseball player but as a warm and caring person."

"However, quite obviously, there are many problems in his life. While he's overcome some of these hurdles, unfortunately he still has more to conquer."

The 32-year-old Strawberry, also facing federal tax-evasion charges, could not be reached for comment. His agent, Eric Goldschmidt, did not return phone calls from The Associated Press.

The team learned Friday of Strawberry's drug policy violation and told him Saturday that he no longer was with the team.

"We told Darryl that, although he will no

TROUBLED

WHO: Major Leaguer Darryl Strawberry

WHAT: The often-troubled veteran was suspended for 60 days by Major League baseball and released by the San Francisco Giants on Monday for violating the league's drug policy and terms of his after-care program.

STRAW'S HISTORY: The 32-year-old has been in and out of trouble since his arrival to the major leagues.

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EMERALD

longer be a Giant, we will continue to make available to him our aftercare and counseling problems," Quinn said. Details of the violation were not available.

The players' association and owners have clashed over drug-related suspensions during the past 15 years. Eugene Orza, the union's No. 2 official, said his side wouldn't make any decisions until after meeting with Strawberry and the doctors.

"After that, we'll decide what happens next," Orza said in Washington at the baseball labor talks.

Strawberry's stint with the Giants followed a career filled with promise and occa-

sional brilliance, but peppered with injuries and off-field troubles.

A star of the New York Mets' team that won the 1986 World Series, he missed most of the 1992 and 1993 seasons with a chronic back problem.

He planned to begin last season with the Dodgers, but didn't show up for the team's final spring training game. The next day, he told the Dodgers he had a substance abuse problem, and avoided suspension by entering the Betty Ford Clinic in Rancho Mirage, Calif., for treatment.

Strawberry finished his stay at Betty Ford on May 6, and three weeks later, the Dodgers released him.

The Giants, hoping he would ignite a slumping team that had been heavily favored to win its division, signed him as a free agent on June 19.

His impact was immediate. Although Strawberry hit just .239 with four home runs and 17 RBIs in 92 at-bats, the Giants went on a tear, winning nine straight games and 17 of 21.

A 9-game deficit to the Dodgers dwindled to just one-half game on July 27, and the team finished the strike-aborted season in contention, 3 games behind.

Other Giants players welcomed his arrival, including Barry Bonds and Matt

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Clinton adds yet another ridiculous twist to strike



TREVOR KEARNEY

I really thought the Major League Baseball strike had gotten as ridiculous as it could possibly get. After the cancellation of last year's World Series, and after open tryouts were held, how could it have gotten any worse?

But the most pathetic chapter of this absurd saga was yet to come.

Bill Clinton decided it was necessary to intervene. Wait a minute, you mean the president? Of the United States? Is that possible?

Apparently it is. Last October,

Clinton appointed W.J. Usery special mediator to the strike. O.K., I can deal with that, I guess. It probably didn't take too many of my tax dollars for Clinton to tell some guy to babysit.

But then Clinton went way too far in his involvement. He began urging the two sides to resolve the issues — which mostly revolve around a salary cap and revenue sharing — and eventually issued a Monday deadline for the resolution.

Well, the deadline came and went, but I could have told you that was going to happen the minute Clinton issued the deadline.

What I cannot tell you, however, is why our president is involved in something as meaningless as this peeing match between the owners and players of the baseball world. Does he have nothing better to do? We are talking about the president, right? Of the United States?

This is the man that is supposed to be running our country, dealing with the federal deficit, working on health care and living up to all the other promises he has made since we entrusted our country in him.

What has happened? Has a Republican-dominated Congress taken that much out of our president? Maybe not having power over real issues has driven Clinton mad, forcing him to go out and take control of something really useless. Or maybe, keeping in mind I am a registered Democrat, it is just time to get a Republican back into office.

Personally, I cannot take the negotiations seriously. Basically it comes down to who will make the extra million bucks next year or the year after. No matter what the representatives for both sides say, it comes down to greed and greed alone.

One of the reasons I can't take them seriously is because of the

amount of money we are talking about. Now, I am not going to say I want sports to be non-profit or I think players make too much for just playing baseball, because I could really care less about that issue.

But, according to the Associated Press, the average player salary last year was nearly \$1.4 million per year, and five teams had payrolls of \$50 million or more per year. Now that is a lot of money — maybe a little too much to fight about.

To put that in perspective, the average player salary, excluding taxes, could buy about 70 thousand beers at a baseball game. And to further clear the matter up, the San Diego Padres — who dished out a mere \$20 million last year after dumping off such big name stars as Fred McGriff (Atlanta) and Gary Sheffield (Florida) — qualify as cheap-

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The Top 25

By The Associated Press

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Feb. 5, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote, and previous ranking:

	Record	Pts	Prev
1 North Carolina (48)	18-1	1,629	2
2 Kansas (17)	17-2	1,598	3
3 Connecticut	17-1	1,486	4
4 Massachusetts	17-2	1,420	1
5 Kentucky (1)	15-3	1,396	6
6 UCLA	14-2	1,318	7
7 Michigan St.	16-2	1,251	9
8 Maryland	17-4	1,168	5
9 Arizona	17-4	1,112	12
10 Syracuse	16-3	1,009	10
11 Wake Forest	14-4	910	14
12 Arkansas	17-5	889	8
13 Missouri	16-3	795	18
14 Arizona St.	16-5	693	16
15 Stanford	15-3	688	17
16 Villanova	15-5	601	19
17 Virginia	13-6	600	15
18 Georgia Tech	15-6	580	21
19 Iowa St.	17-5	425	11
20 Georgetown	14-5	401	13
21 Mississippi St.	14-4	364	—
22 Oregon	13-5	211	22
23 Alabama	15-5	146	20
24 Oklahoma St.	15-6	142	—
25 Purdue	15-5	114	—

Other receiving votes: Memphis 101, Minnesota 95, Oklahoma 91, Brigham Young 46, W. Kentucky 23, Tulane 21, Penn 17, Utah 17, Xavier, Ohio 16, Utah St. 15, Nebraska 13, Florida 12, Georgia 12, California 11, Tulsa 11, Mississippi 10, Cincinnati 9, Texas 9, St. Louis 8, George Washington 7, New Mexico St. 6, Penn St. 6, Virginia Tech 6, Ohio U. 5, Santa Clara 5, Clemson 4, Manhattan 4, N.C. Charlotte 4, Marquette 3, Miami, Ohio 3, Michigan 2, Auburn 1, Louisville 1.

A shining Knight

Stanford sophomore point guard Brevin Knight was named the Pac-10 Conference player of the week on Monday.

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