

Big payroll means little

In the world of Major League Baseball, it is usually true that the teams willing to spend the most on astronomical free-agent salaries are the teams that have the most success during the regular season.

However, several teams have recently found that it

is not necessary to spend a mint to field a competitive baseball team. The front office with the deepest

pockets right now is the New York Yankees.

New York spends the most of any team by far as its payroll totals an eye-popping \$52,945,464, with an average player salary of \$1,825,000.

Not surprisingly, the Yanks are leading the American League East by two games.

The same is true for the teams with the second- and third-most expensive players; Cleveland is leading the AL Central and Baltimore is currently nipping at the Yankees' heels.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that the teams that are willing to spend the most are usually the teams that have the best winning percentage.

Major League owners and general managers know that in baseball, you have to spend money to make money, especially in the current era of big money free-agency and salary arbitration.

While the trend in the Majors has been bigger salaries for franchise players, (Detroit, for example, recently became the first team to break through the \$9 million dollar ceiling by signing Cecil Fielder to a huge contract extension) some teams are bucking the trend with stingy bookkeeping.

Currently, the best team in the Major Leagues is not the team with the highest payroll. The Montreal Expos have the best record in the Bigs right now at 27-13, and they aren't even in the top half of the league in terms of player salaries.

As a matter of fact, the Expos have the lowest payroll in all of Major League baseball.

Les Expos, a team that plays in one of the smallest markets in all of baseball, was forced to trim more than half their payroll during the off season in order to turn a profit in 1996.

Turn to SCHNEIDER, Page 8

Stoudamire earns rookie honors

■ **NBA:** The Portland native averaged about 19 points per game during his first season

NEW YORK (AP) — Damon Stoudamire of the Toronto Raptors won the NBA Rookie of the Year Award on Wednesday.

Stoudamire received 76 of a possible 113 votes from a panel of sports writers and broadcasters. Portland's Arvydas Sabonis was second with 17 votes and Golden State's Joe Smith third with 15.

Other players who received votes were Jerry Stackhouse of Philadelphia (2), Michael Finley of Phoenix (2) and Kevin Garnett of Minnesota (1).

Stoudamire, picked seventh in last June's NBA draft, became the sixth lowest selection to win the rookie award. The lowest ever was Mark Jackson of Indiana, who won after being the 18th pick of the New York Knicks in the 1987 draft.

Last year's rookie award was shared by Grant Hill of Detroit and Jason Kidd of Dallas.

Stoudamire, a 5-foot-11 point guard from the University of Arizona, averaged 19 points, 9.3 assists and four rebounds per game for the expansion Raptors. He led all rookies in assists and steals and averaged 40.9 minutes per game, seventh highest for a rookie in NBA history.

Stoudamire set a rookie record for 3-point field goals with 133-for-337 and was MVP of the rookie game during the All-Star weekend.

Stoudamire is a native of Portland and graduated from Wilson High School in 1991.



Former Arizona standout Damon Stoudamire was named the NBA Rookie of the Year on Tuesday.

Surgery won't keep Sabonis out of summer Olympic Games

■ **ATHLETE:** The native Lithuanian will represent his home country in Atlanta, Georgia

PORTLAND (AP) — Arvydas Sabonis, the 31-year-old rookie center who led the Portland Trail Blazers to a sixth-place finish in the NBA's Western Conference, has undergone arthroscopic surgery on his right knee.

The Blazers said Sabonis is expected to recover in time to play for his native Lithuania in this summer's Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Trail Blazers' team physician Dr. Don Roberts performed the surgery Friday to repair torn cartilage.

In his rookie NBA season, Sabonis averaged 14.5 points and 8.1 rebounds per game.

Sabonis became a starter late in the season, and the team won 18 of its last 22 games, propelling the Blazers to a five-game opening round series with Utah.

But the Jazz won the deciding game and advanced to round two against San Antonio.

Sabonis finished second to Toronto's Damon Stoudamire in voting for the NBA's rookie of the year, grabbing 17 of the 113 votes.

On Tuesday, Sabonis was also runner-up to Chicago's Tony Kukoc for the league's Sixth Man award.

Favre faces tough times with drug dependency

■ **NFL:** The Packers' quarterback is entering a drug treatment center

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Specialists who deal with drug dependency say Brett Favre will confront tremendous challenges when he returns to football following treatment for his addiction to pain medication.

The Green Bay Packers' star quarterback and the NFL's Most Valuable Player says he is voluntarily entering a drug treatment center "for however long it takes to get better."

Favre, at a news conference Tuesday, attributed his addiction to his many operations but didn't say what medications he was taking.

The NFL on Wednesday refused to confirm or deny reports the 26-year-old player also will be treated for alcohol abuse.

The Packers hope Favre can be ready for training camp in late July. However, Ian Cummings, president of the Association of Emergency Physicians, said that might be wishful thinking because most recovery programs take several months.

"It's a tough problem to overcome. It's not a quick fix," Cummings said. "And I would caution that any quick fix that might be attempted might not be durable."

Cummings, a specialist in substance abuse, said that from now on Favre will almost certainly have to be treated with non-narcotics for aches and pains.

"People who were addicted to narcotics are always at risk of relapse," he said.

The mental aspect of addiction might be

“He could have very easily kept this secret. ... But he chose to say, 'I have a problem.' That's gutsy.”

— Thomas Tutko
Psychologist

even harder to handle, suggested Thomas Tutko, a psychologist at San Jose State University who has studied drugs in sports for three decades.

"The physical part you can fight. But how do you fight phantoms? How do you fight you lining up and the guy across from you calls you a junkie?" Tutko asked. "Or people on your own team are wondering why you still involved in drugs? You have a poor performance, is that the reason for it?"

"He's going to get hit again, he's going to get clobbered again. How is he going to deal with it? It isn't like, 'OK, well I've decided to be in pain the rest of my life.' He's going to have to learn to be in control and know how to do it."

Neither Tutko nor Cummings is involved in Favre's treatment, but both said they respect the quarterback for going public with his dependency because admission is the first step in the arduous recovery process.

"He could have very easily kept this secret," said Tutko, speaking from San Jose, Calif. "He could have done what Elvis Presley did, stuff

himself with drugs and then finally deteriorate. But he chose to say, 'I have a problem.' That's gutsy."

Coach Mike Holmgren has instructed his staff and medical personnel not to discuss Favre's situation.

WKOW-TV in Madison, Wis., reported that Favre will enter the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kan.

Favre says he sought help under the league's substance abuse policy in February after a seizure following ankle surgery.

Because he entered the substance-abuse program voluntarily, Favre won't be subject to a suspension. He will undergo periodic drug testing, but the results will be used for treatment, not punishment.

NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said the league wouldn't confirm or deny ESPN's Tuesday night report, which cited unidentified sources, that Favre would also be treated for alcohol abuse.

"The confidentiality of the league's substance abuse program prohibits us from getting into specifics," Aiello said.

Favre has often joked about being a big beer drinker and he has never made a secret that he enjoys the nightlife.

Cummings said an alcohol problem would be a double-whammy.

"It can complicate the treatment and recovery processes," he said by phone from Dayville, Conn. "Alcohol withdrawal is perhaps more precarious than narcotics withdrawal, physically, because it's a more dangerous phenomena."