

Baseball must end disparities



OUT IN LEFT FIELD

ADAM JUDE

The past few weeks have brought about a lot of sorrow and pain, and most of you, like me, are probably still grieving from the tragic experience.

And I'm sorry to bring the subject up in this time of mourning, but I think it's an appropriate time.

I have to talk about those Yankees and how the baseball world must finally overcome the stronghold of the flamboyant owner George Steinbrenner.

I know, I know, it's the off-season, and no one wants to hear about the richest franchise in baseball history anymore, especially me. Because just like you, I despise the Yankees with a passion.

It killed me to see a Subway Series (not that I actually watched any of the five games) because nobody outside of New York cared what happened.

I would have rather watched "Dawson's Creek" or Tom Green having surgery on his testes than watch the Yankees win another World Series ring.

It's absolutely ridiculous and disgraceful that Major League Baseball has let the greatest game in American history go to shame — by letting someone buy the World Series.

Yep, you heard right: The best team in baseball is the best team in baseball because of money.

Aren't you surprised? (And can you sense the sarcasm?)

With the addition of outfielder David Justice, pitcher Denny Neagle and seven other mid-season acquisitions, the Yankees' \$92 million opening-day payroll skyrocketed to a record \$115 million by October. Now, I didn't see too many other teams completely make over their rosters halfway through the season. While there's nothing illegal about that, it hurts the rest of the league, it makes baseball a miserable game to watch, and it has to stop.

The National Football League has a salary cap. The National Basketball Association limits its teams' budgets (although there are a ton of loopholes).

So why does baseball insist on being unlimited in its spending?

To be honest, I have no idea. Perhaps Commissioner Bud Selig

is secretly a die-hard Yankee fan and loves to torture the rest of us.

Granted, low-budget teams such as the Chicago White Sox (ranked 21st in the payroll with a \$36 million budget) and the Oakland Athletics (\$32 million) had successful seasons and made it into the playoffs. But if these teams expect to keep their fortunes in the near future, they had better expect to fork up some serious bonuses.

Other small-market teams, such as the Minnesota Twins (with the lowest total salary, \$20 million) and the Milwaukee Brewers, should be given a fair cut in the league and the opportunity to compete on the same level. If not, these franchises may have to relocate.

The Kansas City Royals' owner is one of the wealthiest in the game, yet his team is one of the worst. This, in part, is because the Royals can't bring in any revenue. In fact, hardly anybody can. Since the 1994 strike, the league's 30 teams are collectively in debt by more than \$2 billion.

Only three teams have made a profit in the last six years.

And, surprise, guess who's atop the list?

Yep, the Yankees, along with Cleveland and Colorado.

I know, those of you out there who call yourselves baseball fans and claim to love the Yankees will e-mail me and tell me that the Bronx Bombers have patiently built this dynasty over the past decade and deserve all the success they get.

That's a crock.

The Yankees are so good because they have so much money. Period.

They can afford to buy everyone and everything and do so without the thought of the consequences that will result to this great

game.

While Selig has appointed committees to work on these disparities, nothing has yet been finalized. But it needs to happen, and it needs to happen immediately to guarantee a balanced league.

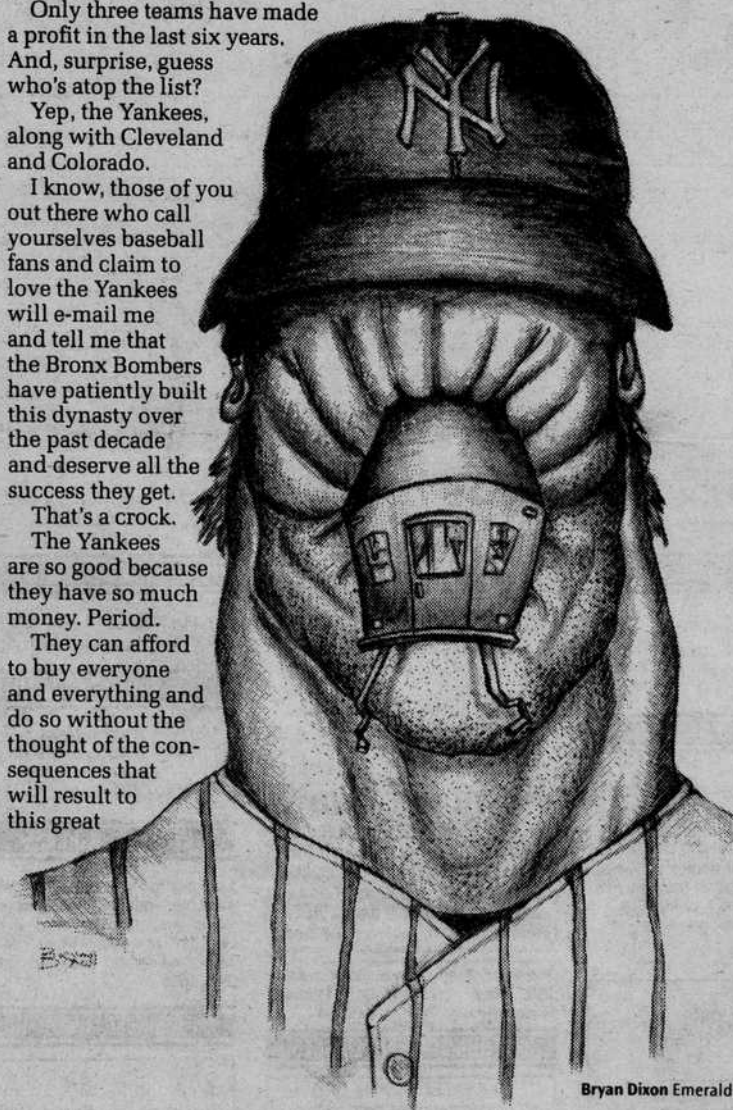
Some suggestions have been made to put a tax on teams with a payroll greater than \$84 million, while others have recommended a revenue-sharing system.

These sound like legitimate ideas, but the only true way to eliminate the disparity is a salary cap. Smaller market teams must be able to compete, and a salary cap would at least ensure potential success.

If there was a salary cap in baseball and the Yankees had still won four of the last five titles, I would still be extremely frustrated, but at least I would feel better about the whole situation.

Then, at least, I would have known that everyone else had a fair chance.

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Bryan Dixon Emerald

Football

continued from page 8

ping up the title this weekend.

"Oh no doubt, [Oregon State's] going to be ready, and hopefully Arizona can go down there and take care of their part, and we can handle our business up here," Bauman said. "Even if they don't, we can win it if we win out."

The other way the Ducks (8-1 overall, 6-0 Pac-10) can win the tight race, is if it beats Oregon State Nov. 18 in the Civil War, regardless of what they do against Cal. However, a win over the Golden Bears at least guarantees Oregon of having a share of the league title.

For Oregon State, the road to Pasadena got a little tougher with Washington's comeback victory over the Wildcats last weekend. The Beavers must win their last

two games and hope for a Husky loss, but Washington's remaining two games are against UCLA at home and Washington State on the road.

Oregon State head coach Dennis Erickson is trying to just get his team focused on the task at hand, and not worry about how the Ducks and Huskies do.

"It really makes no difference what happens in either of those games, if they win, lose or draw, because we've got to win," Erickson said.

Washington will go to the Rose Bowl if it wins its final two games and the Beavers take care of the Ducks.

Frankel fever

One week, he's on the most wanted list of a few Ducks fans, and the next he's getting his name chanted by them.

Oregon's kicker Josh Frankel has certainly experienced the highs and lows of being a kicker this season, after missing crucial kicks in some games and knocking through the game-winning 47-yard field goal against Washington State.

The overtime kick against the Cougars marked his career-long, edging the 46-yard boot he connected on earlier in Saturday's game.

For his efforts, Frankel was awarded the Pac-10 special teams' player of the week.

"You know, there's probably a few games this year where I should have gotten the Pac-10 goat of the week," Frankel said. "I'm extremely grateful that not only the coaches stuck with me, but also my teammates. We don't give up on each other."

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