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SKV, continued from Page A10

they were considering starting up operations in late-June and playing games in their home stadiums without fans.

But there is a realistic possibility that the MLB will indeed cancel the season due to the virus.

After making \$10.7 billion in revenue last season, MLB could handle the loss of one season. But it's likely that a season cancellation would be a death sentence for some minor league teams — the money organizations make via sponsorships, ticket sales, merchandise and concessions are all dependent on the team taking the field.

“If the season gets canceled, a lot of organizations might not survive,” Walker said. The Volcanoes are still preparing for there to be baseball this summer and head groundskeeper Rick Smith has done extensive fieldwork to keep the surface in top condition. Although people within the organization are still staying

“The coronavirus drastically changed Minor League Baseball’s leverage on the situation and the MLB is taking advantage.”

— Mickey Walker
Volcanoes CEO

optimistic about the prospect of a season in 2020, Walker admitted that people in MiLB don’t share the same sentiments.

“It does feel like people in Minor League Baseball are pessimistic at best that there will be any kind of season,” Walker said.

In the event that the MiLB season gets canceled, Walker believes that the organization will still be in good financial standing

thanks to their outside contracts — such as In-N-Out — and the ability to rent out their parking lot to shipping trucks and RVs.

“We feel like we pretty well positioned to weather

this storm. Not to say it won’t take its toll, but because of our outside contracts, we would be in an okay situation,” Walker said.

Unfortunately for the Volcanoes, the organization doesn’t have much control over the future agreement between MLB and MiLB. However, Walker said the team is exploring different options depending on what happens between both sides.

Even if MiLB gives in and agrees to MLB’s proposal to cut affiliations with 42 minor league teams, it’s not a full-fledged guarantee that the Volcanoes will be on that list.

Although the Volcanoes were on the original 42-team proposal list by MLB that was released last November, according to Cooper, there have been verifiable instances of teams moving on and off the list.

Cooper says there are varying reasons for teams moving on and off the list. Certain organizations have

gotten facility improvements approved while others may have proved to fit better into MLB’s goal of realignment.

“The fact that the list is fluid shows that the list is BS. If you were so sure about the negative details about each team, like travel or facilities, then there would be no question and the list would be set in stone,” Walker said.

According to Walker, the Northwest League (NWL), which has been the home to the Volcanoes since their inception in 1997, are in good standing with the MLB, which is why Walker and the rest of the organization were perplexed when they were on the list of 42 teams, along with the Tri-City Dust Devils of the NWL.

“MLB has made it pretty clear that they love the Northwest League and how much they value its presence in the Northwest, where the only other professional baseball is the (Seattle) Mariners. So why would they make it a six-team league?” Walker said.

If the Volcanoes do indeed lose their affiliation with the San Francisco Giants, Walker mentioned the possibility of the team going independent — similar to the 1973 Portland Mavericks, featured in the Netflix documentary *The Battered Bastards of Baseball*.

While it’s unknown how it would logistically work, Walker said that the team could serve as a chance for players to be seen — which would likely now be more realistic because of the reduction of the MLB Draft. The organization would provide

host families, but the players would have to pay to play, as opposed to getting paid to play. Walker also mentioned that, in this scenario, the team would still want to be a part of the Northwest League.

“It doesn’t mean baseball will be gone. It just might

look different. We want to explore every possible option,” Walker said. “There are a lot of unknowns at this point, but we don’t want people to lose hope. We are still optimistic about this season and the future of this team,” Walker said.

MYB fundraising for 2021 McNary sports

Knowing it can be challenging to find a face mask these days, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, McNary Youth Baseball has decided to start a fundraiser that benefits both youth sports and high school sports in Keizer. A portion of funds raised will be donated to the McNary High School athletic program for 2021.

People in need of masks can order then for \$12.50 at mcnaryfacemasks.itemorder.com/product/14115220.

Once the order is made, the mask will ship directly to your home.



Submitted by McNary Youth Baseball is raising money for sports in Keizer by selling masks.

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