



AP Photo/File

Baseball pitchers Homer Bailey, Kevin Brown, Matt Cain, Zack Greinke, Cole Hamels, Mike Hampton, Felix Hernandez, Clayton Kershaw, Cliff Lee, Jon Lester, CC Sabathia and Johan Santana. Max Scherzer and Jon Lester reported to spring training with new teams, swelling the \$100 million pitcher club to 16 members.

\$100 million pitchers must produce results quickly

By RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

Max Scherzer and Jon Lester might as well have neon-green dollar signs stamped all over their uniforms and caps.

Their careers were redefined in the offseason when they joined baseball's elite echelon of \$100 million arms, a sweet 16 whose salaries total an even sweeter \$2.42 billion. Every game they start and every pitch they throw will be viewed through the prism of their 1 percent incomes.

Judging by history, they had better succeed swiftly with their new teams. Wins and innings pitched are likely to dwindle with age.

Theo Epstein, the Chicago Cubs' president of baseball operations who signed Lester, likens these megadeals to a "splurge on a luxury item," baseball's equivalent of a Birkin bag or vintage Ferrari.

Is the roster candy worth it to their teams? Or merely a status symbol?

"They are difference-makers. They are special talents. Usually there are only 10 to 12

of these in the game, and they give you something that no one else has," said agent Scott Boras, who negotiated the deals for Kevin Brown, Barry Zito and Scherzer. "A lot of teams have a lot of pitchers, but few teams have a true No. 1."

Only three pitchers have won World Series rings after signing nine-figure contracts: CC Sabathia with the New York Yankees, and Zito and Matt Cain with the San Francisco Giants. The rest find their finances sated but their ambitions starved.

The \$100 million pitchers have combined to average a 12-9 record and 3.39 ERA during the first four seasons of their deals, according to STATS. During the remaining years, they fell to a 7-7 record and 4.43 ERA.

Durability decreases dramatically, with the group averaging 205 innings in first seasons, 178 by the third year and 132 by the fifth.

Justin Verlander was 124-65 and 30 years old when he signed his big deal with Detroit in March 2013. He is 28-24 since, slowed by core muscle surgery before the 2014 season.

"I don't think that there's anyone that looks at long-term contracts for pitchers that are older and thinks that all of them are going to be years of investment that are at the highest rate," Detroit Tigers president Dave Dombrowski said. "You expect some type of decline and adjustment that takes place."

Pitchers and catchers start workouts with the World Series champion San Francisco Giants on Thursday, and position players join five days later. Among the players making fresh starts are Pablo Sandoval and Hanley Ramirez with Boston; Matt Kemp, Justin Upton and James Shields with San Diego; and David Robertson with the Chicago White Sox.

And Alex Rodriguez returns to the New York Yankees at age 39 following his year-long suspension.

Seeking the first championship in franchise history, Washington gave the 30-year-old Scherzer a \$210 million, seven-year contract, \$5 million shy of the record for pitchers set by the Los Angeles Dodgers' Clayton Kershaw.

Knappa Loggers take top spots in league awards

Northwest League boys basketball belonged to the Knappa Loggers this season, and so did the big awards announced in last week's league tournament.

Knappa's Chris Spencer was named Coach of the Year, and senior Tyson Burnard (backed by his 50-point performance in the seeding game) earned Player of the Year honors.

Logger seniors Justin Drago and Andy Miller were selected to the second team, and freshman Dale Takalo was named honorable mention.

Knappa is preparing to host its first state playoff game since Feb. 26, 2011 (an 86-47 win over Yoncalla).

Union (16-8 overall) will visit Knappa (20-5) at 6 p.m. Friday, with the winner advancing to the final eight in Pendleton. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$4 for students.

The Northwest League girls Player of the Year was Vernonia senior Meghan Sullivan, and Bill Stephens of Faith Bible was named Coach of the Year.

Knappa senior Shailei Wright made the first team, senior teammate Kacie Cameron was second team, and junior Chloe Little earned honorable mention.



ED ELLIOTT — For the Daily Astorian

Knappa senior Tyson Burnard tosses in two of his 50 points in last week's win over Vernonia. Burnard was named the NWL Player of the Year.

SCOREBOARD

PREP SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

Boys Basketball — Crook County at Seaside, 7 p.m.; Union at Knappa, 6 p.m.

Wrestling — OSAA State Tournament, Portland Memorial Coliseum, All Day.

SATURDAY

Girls Basketball — Wahkiakum at Ilwaco, 2 p.m., at WF West HS, Chehalis

Wrestling — OSAA State Tournament, Portland Memorial Coliseum, All Day.

BASKETBALL

HIGH SCHOOLS

Northwest All-League Boys
Player of the Year: Tyson Burnard, Knappa

Coach of the Year: Chris Spencer, Knappa

First Team

Tyson Burnard, Sr., Knappa

Tom Chiang, Sr., Delphian
Brett Elder, Jr., Nestucca
DeMonte Malloy, So., City Chr.
Clay Sullivan, Fr., Vernonia
Cole Waibel, Sr., Gaston
Russell Walker, Sr., Faith Bible

Second Team

Justin Drago, Sr., Knappa
Brett Elliot, So., Vernonia
Max Halverson, So., NeahKahNie
Andy Miller, Sr., Knappa
Guillermo Pimental, Sr., Nestucca

Honorable Mention

Tristan Adams, So., Vernonia
Jack Evans, Sr., City Christian
J.J. Gonzalez, Sr., Delphian
Cameron Hofer, Sr., Faith Bible
Brandon Luey, Sr., Faith Bible
Dale Takalo, Fr., Knappa
Quentin Tomak, Jr., Delphian
Keenan Wenrick, Sr., Nestucca
Sportsmanship: City Christian

Girls

Player of the Year: Meghan Sullivan, Vernonia

Coach of the Year: Bill Stephens, Faith Bible

First Team

Meghan Sullivan, Sr., Vernonia
Sierra Falcon, Sr., Faith Bible
Julia Fletcher, Sr., Vernonia
Piper Lewellen, Sr., City Christian
Sue Traver, Sr., City Christian
Shailei Wright, Sr., Knappa

Second Team

Kacie Cameron, Sr., Knappa
Jaycie Endicott, Sr., Gaston
Alaina Holm, Jr., Neah-Kah-Nie
Mara Irving, Sr., Faith Bible
Kylie Richwine, Sr., Nestucca
Ma'Ca Veselkova, Jr., Vernonia

Honorable Mention

Monica Chatelain, Sr., Nestucca
Haylie Davis, Sr., Gaston
Traci Fleming, Sr., Faith Bible
Jessica Irving, So., Faith Bible
Annie Kelly, Sr., Neah-Kah-Nie
Chloe Little, Jr., Knappa
Lisa Paje, So., Vernonia
Annie Romig, Jr., Neah-Kah-Nie
Felicia Vong, Fr., City Christian
Sportsmanship: Nestucca

Blazers beat slumping Spurs

PORTLAND (AP) — Wesley Matthews and the Portland Trail Blazers hope they put their recent fourth-quarter woes behind them Wednesday night.

Matthews scored 31 points, LaMarcus Aldridge had 11 points and 13 rebounds, and Portland beat the slumping San Antonio Spurs 111-95 for its first victory since the All-Star break.

The Trail Blazers are 25-4 when leading after three quarters, but all four losses have come in the past 10 games. The most glaring flop was Sunday, when Portland blew a 13-point lead as Memphis outscored the Blazers 34-15 during the fourth period.

Portland had an 81-71 lead heading into the fourth quarter against the Spurs, and the home crowd had reason to gasp when San Antonio opened the period with consecutive 3-pointers by Danny Green and Tony Parker that

sliced the margin to four.

But in a matter of 3 minutes, Portland ended the drama by blitzing San Antonio with a 14-2 run that made it 95-79.

"Tonight, everyone was locked in," Blazers guard Da-

mian Lillard said. "We know how it felt ... last game against Memphis when we played so well to let it slip away. We didn't want that feeling again, so everybody came out and did whatever we needed to do for our team to pull it out."

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