



MLB

Lockout talks back as openers threatened

BY RONALD BLUM

AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball's negotiations to salvage opening day resume at a new venue Monday: Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter, Florida.

Colorado Rockies CEO Dick Monfort, chairman of the owners' labor policy committee, was expected to join a management delegation that includes Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem, the clubs' lead negotiator.

Bruce Meyer, the union's chief negotiator, was expected to be joined by players. The site of negotiations is about 3 miles

from the home of New York Mets pitcher Max Scherzer, among the eight players on the union's executive subcommittee.

The ballpark usually would be the spring training home of the Miami Marlins and St. Louis Cardinals at this time of year, but workouts failed to start on time last Wednesday due to baseball's ninth work stoppage, it's first since 1995.

Monday's session will be just the seventh on core economics since the lockout started Dec. 2, and the sides have met on consecutive days just once, on Jan. 24 and 25. MLB said Friday that it intended to have meetings with the union every day in the coming week.

The lockout enters its 82nd day Monday. MLB on Friday canceled spring training games from Feb. 26 through March 4.

While owners and players have participated by Zoom, the only ones to attend a session in person have been Monfort and free-agent reliever Andrew Miller, on Jan. 24.

Until now, all talks during the lockout had been in New York at the offices of MLB and the players' association.

MLB told the union that Feb. 28 is the last possible day to reach an agreement to allow openers on March 31, given the desire for four weeks of workouts and additional time to ratify an agreement and have players report to camps in Florida and Arizona.

But the sides agreed to less training time after disrupted spring trainings in 1990, 1995 and 2020.

NASCAR

Cindric's gift for Penske's 85th:
ROOKIE WIN
AT DAYTONA

BY JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Roger Penske had one rule at the Daytona 500 for his drivers: Do Not Wreck Each Other.

His orders were followed Sunday night when Austin Cindric worked with teammate Ryan Blaney over the closing laps to win the Daytona 500 as a celebration of Penske's 85th birthday.

It was just one year ago that Penske drivers Cindric, Joey Logano and Brad Keselowski all crashed while racing for the win on the final lap at Daytona International Speedway. It took time for tempers to thaw as Penske made his expectations clear to his drivers.

"We had talked for weeks after last year, when we were one-two and ended up in the fence," Penske said. "I said, 'Look, the best man wins at the end. I think we've got to work together.'"

"They played ball, and Austin won."

Cindric was the leader at the start of the two-lap overtime shootout with Blaney beside him. He was driving the No. 2 Ford, the flagship car at Team Penske



Chris O'Meara/AP photos

PHOTOS: Austin Cindric celebrates winning the NASCAR Daytona 500 auto race in Florida on Sunday.

that was vacated at the end of last season when Keselowski left the organization, and now Keselowski was behind him determined not to get beaten by his replacement.

But Cindric switched lanes as soon as he'd cleared Blaney to drop in front of his teammate so the duo could hook together for two final trips around the track. Blaney made one desperate attempt up high to get around Cindric, but Cindric threw a huge block that forced Blaney into the

outside wall.

Bubba Wallace then surged even with Cindric in the bottom lane, forcing Cindric to forget about Blaney behind him and focus on beating Wallace to the finish line.

"Oh, my God. I've got so many people to thank," a stunned Cindric said after climbing from his car and saluting the capacity crowd of some 120,000 spectators. "First and foremost Roger Penske, happy birthday!"

Then Cindric remembered Blaney, who gave him a winning push but finished fourth.

"Appreciate Ryan being a great teammate," Cindric said. "Obviously, he wants to win this one."

Blaney was clear on the Penske expectations — "I wanted to try to win the race for Roger Penske. Whether that was me or another car, that's what I was doing," — and didn't have much to say after the race about Cindric's block.

"I don't know. Congrats to him, I guess," Blaney said. "You've got to throw a block in that situation."

It was the first career Cup victory for the 23-year-old Cindric, who was promoted from the Xfinity Series to replace Keselowski and run for NASCAR's rookie of the year honors.

The win was the third Daytona 500 victory for Penske, who also picked up the trophy in 2008 with Ryan Newman and 2015 with Logano. Ford Motor Co. has won the Daytona 500 17 times, including two in a row.

Wallace finished second for the second time in his career in the Daytona 500.

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2022 Winter Olympics



Bernat Armangué/AP

Teams arrive during the closing ceremony of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing on Sunday. "We welcome China as a winter sport country," International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach said, closing the Games.

Beijing's Games close, ending a virus-safe but odd global moment

BY TED ANTHONY

AP National Writer

BEIJING — A pile of figure-skating rubble created by Russian misbehavior. A new Chinese champion — from California. An ace American skier who faltered and went home empty-handed. The end of the Olympic line for the world's most renowned snowboarder. All inside an anti-COVID "closed loop" enforced by China's authoritarian government.

The terrarium of a Winter Games that has been Beijing 2022 came to its end Sunday, capping an unprecedented Asian Olympic trifecta and sending the planet's most global sporting event off to the West for the foreseeable future, with no chance of returning to this corner of the world until at least 2030.

It was weird. It was messy and, at the

same time, somehow sterile. It was controlled and calibrated in ways only Xi Jinping's China could pull off. And it was sequestered in a "bubble" that kept participants and the city around them — and, by extension, the sporadically watching world — at arm's length.

On Sunday night, Xi and International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach stood together as Beijing handed off to Milan-Cortina, site of the 2026 Winter Games. "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" kicked off a notably Western-flavored show with fiery characteristics as dancers with tiny, Chinese snowflakes glided across the stadium in a ceremony that, like the opening, was headed by Chinese director Zhang Yimou.

Unlike the first pandemic Olympics in Tokyo last summer, which featured all

but empty seats at the opening and closing, a modest but energetic crowd populated the seats of Beijing's "Bird's Nest" stadium. It felt somewhat incongruous — a show bursting with color and energy and enthusiasm and even joy, the very things that couldn't assert themselves inside China's COVID bubble.

"We welcome China as a winter sport country," Bach said, closing the Games. He called their organization "extraordinary" and credited the Chinese and their organizing committee for serving them up "in such an excellent way and a safe way."

By many mechanical measures, these Games were a success. They were, in fact, quite safe — albeit in the carefully modulated, dress-up-for-company way that authoritarian governments always do best.

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