

# The Press Box

By Lenny Luchtefeld  
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## A Look Back

One year ago I was announced to be the Co-League Director with Kevin. I must say, it has been a year of learning. I have also had a lot of fun and excitement during my first year. One of the benefits to this job is, I get a chance to communicate with all of you more often. I want to thank all of you for helping me when I asked for information and setting me straight when I made a mistake. I hope I haven't made too many.

When I was in the process of talking to Kevin about the undertaking of becoming an LD, I had lots of ideas about our league converting over to using the web site for information and for accessing forms. Brian Budzyn, who runs the web site, and I spent many hours trying to think of ways we could make the web site work for us, make the league less expensive to run and get the information out to you sooner. During the off-season we experimented on many new looks for the site, forms and ideas. I think the transition overall has went very well. I know there were bumps along the way but we seemed to get through all of them.

I also want to take a moment to thank Brian. He has been a great help to Kevin, the league and me. Believe me, he is the brain's of the outfit. 99% of what you see on the web site is his due to his foresight and hard work.

I never realized what undertaking it was to get all this information at the end of each month and put it into a newsletter. I have to applaud Kevin for all of his efforts to make this league run so well. I have a tough enough time just doing half of the league reports and he did them all for years by himself.

I want to thank Mark Lentz, Corey Weissner, Tom Taormina, Dave Little, Tony Galietta and Vaughn Nuest for all of their efforts. These guys are part of the administrative team and help make the league run smooth. Mark takes care of free agency and does a great job. Corey runs the draft and does it an excellent job. I don't know how he and Mark keep all the players straight. Tom and Dave take care of the stats, standing and league leaders. Man, I know I don't want that job. God Bless both of them for taking on those duties and keeping the numbers going. Tony writes the NL report every month. He keeps the pen flowing each month during the season. Vaughn has the job of league historian. He's that research guy you see in the library looking up stuff all the time. Vaughn has helped the league by also giving us support and sharing information and forms from our sister league, the BRASS league.

I look for the 2000 and the beyond seasons to be even better. I believe that the information can come even quicker and more efficiently in the future. We now have forms and spreadsheets set up and now it's just a matter of improving on what we have. If you have other ways that you think we can improve the flow of information, have a suggestion or can improve the web site, please let Kevin, Brian or myself know. We want and need your input. We are always looking for ways to improve our league.

# NL Playoffs Get Underway

## Wildcard Series

### Stanley 1 @ North Georgia 4

Game 1, Despite only having 3 hits as a team, the Jackets scratch out a 2 - 1 victory, thanks to Richie Sexson's 2 out double in the 8th. Sexson was the hero as he had both RBI's and 2 of the 3 hits. Matt Beech picked w/ the victory, retiring the only batter he faced in the 8th. Christiansen got the save.

Game 2 the Jackets took this one in 13 innings. The Jackets had a 3-2 lead going into the 8th inning, but a Darren Lewis triple, followed by a F. Garcia single to tie it up. In the 11th inning, the Sioux gained the upper hand w/ a Terry Steinbach HR. The Jackets, down to their last out in the 11th, got a surprise HR from Mark McLemore to keep the game going. In the bottom of the 13th, singles by Jefferson and Reed, and a walk to McLemore loaded the bases for Jeter. Florie bore down and got the K for the 2nd out, but Glanville singled to center to clinch the victory.

Game 3 saw B. Moehler of the Sioux dominate the Jackets line-up. Holding the Jackets to just 4 hits, he picked up a complete game shutout 8 - 0. The Stanley offense was led by Darren Lewis who scored 3 runs, Bubba Trammell w/ 2 RBI's and Mike Lansing, who went 3 for 3, with 2 doubles and a HR.

Game 4 saw another complete game shutout, this time by North Georgia's Jon Lieber. Lieber scattered 6 hits for the victory. Cal Ripken and Richie Sexson both went deep to lead the Jackets' offense.

Game 5 Jackets win by a score of 2 - 1. Stanley took a 1 - 0 lead into the 9th, but a walk to Ripken led to a 2-run HR by Richie Sexson (2nd HR in as many games) to give the Jackets the lead. Christiansen came on in the 9th to relieve Reynolds and pick up the save.

## NL Division Series

### North Georgia 2 @ Bloomington 4

22 players saw action in a barnburner in North Georgia in game 1 as the Bees win 9-7. Bloomington's, Rafael Palmeiro, wins the next 2 games of the series with a HR's in each game 5-2 and 4-2.

Tony Gwynn's 8th inning grand slam staved off elimination for the Yellow Jackets in game 4 and the series headed back to North Georgia for Game 5 with the Bees leading the series 3 games to 1.

Tony's bunch scratched and clawed and came back over and over again against a Bee offense that was stuck in neutral all series. Bloomington's management was thanking God for Pedro Martinez, Greg Maddux, Roger Clemens, Jesse Orosco and Jeff Shaw. The pitching and Palmeiro won the series, Raffy with a .348, 4 HR, 8 RBI effort.

McGwire finally reached the seats in the 6th game...and did so twice, helping the Bees win game six by a 7-2 score.

## National League Championship Series

### Long Island 3 @ Bloomington 4

Game 1... Long Island strikes first as they score 2 runs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning. That unfortunately was the end of their scoring. McGwire slams his 10<sup>th</sup> homer of the playoffs, a 3 run shot and that was all the Bees needed to take this game.

Game 2...McGwire does it again! This time it took 11 innings to beat the Tigers. McGwire homer in the bottom of the 11<sup>th</sup> wins it for the Bees 2-1.

Game 3...The Tigers, back home, jumped all over Pedro for 9 runs in the first 3 innings and then have to hold off the Bees to finally wins 11-7.

Game 4...The Tigers down 4-1 after 3 and a half innings started chipping away at that lead and Clemens. A great comeback win as they tag Shaw with the loss and celebrate tying the series at 2-2 as they win this one 6-5.

Game 5...Let's play 2! These guys didn't have enough fun in the first 4 games of the series; they had to play 18 innings to finally get a winner here. A see saw game that ended with Long Island winning this slugfest 11-10. The Tigers only need one more win to get past Bloomington.

Game 6...The Bees are on death's door as they are losing 5-4 in the bottom of the 8<sup>th</sup>. Lightenberg can't shut the door as Bloomington comes back with 2 runs in the 8<sup>th</sup> and go on to win 6-5.

Game 7... This one game for a trip to the BRASSball championship. Jones versus Clemens. Well, Jones didn't have it today as the Bees beat him up for 5 runs in 6 innings work. Clemens goes the distance as he only gives up 1 run and takes the win. After all of the one run games; this was the only game that was not close. You could feel the momentum shift as Long Island let the last game get away from them.

***Over in the AL, Cook County and Box City have advanced to the AL championship series. The final 3 teams, Bloomington, Cook County and Box City will meet face to face sometime in November to determine the BRASSball champion. We will announce the BRASSball champion next month.***

## NL MVP

The Bees, Mark McGwire, is named the National League's MVP this year. McGwire was voted first on every ballot but 3. He won the award over 2<sup>nd</sup> place finisher Bagwell, by a 48-34 margin. This is McGwire's 2<sup>nd</sup> straight title. McGwire batted .295 with 68 homers and 173 RBI's. He also had a slugging percentage of .712. Here's the way the rest of the voting looked:

<b>McGwire</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Bagwell</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Olerud</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Palmiero</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Biggio</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Jordan</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Clemens</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Jones,C</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Higginson</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Hoffman</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Renteria</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Canseco</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Bell, Derek</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Nixon</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Rodriquez,I</b>	<b>1</b>

## NL Cy Young

Bloomington's, Roger Clemens, is this year's CY Young award winner. Clemens finished 2<sup>nd</sup> last year to Maddux. Clemens takes the award by finished ahead of Ocala's Kenny Rogers by a 52-37 vote. Clemens was 25-5 with 2.84 ERA. He also fanned 273 batters. Below is the final wrap-up of the voting:

<b>Clemens</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Rogers</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Maddux</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Hoffman</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Martinez</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Wood</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Lima</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Shaw</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Hermanson</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Reynolds</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chistiansen</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Daal</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Parris</b>	<b>1</b>

## NL Rookie of the Year

Long Island's, Kerry Wood, is voted in as the Rookie of the Year for 1999. Armando Benitez won the award last year. Wood just edged out Todd Helton by a 42-38 vote. Wood had an ERA of 3.45 and record of 13-7. Here are all the votes counted:

Wood	42
Helton	38
Stewart	28
Abreu	20
Parris	19
Walker	15
Guerrero,W	9
Ordonez	2
Tomko	2
Fox	2
Lightenberg	2
Tatis	1

## Free Agency

Looking for that cleanup hitter, that number one starter or that one piece to the puzzle that is missing? This could be your year. By November 10<sup>th</sup> you should receive a list of all the free agents from Mark Lentz. Mark did an outstanding job with free agency last year. Mark did a quick and efficient job of keeping track of all the free agents and their contracts. Free agent bids are due to be returned to Mark by the 25<sup>th</sup> of November.

This is an exiting and yet nervous time for all of us. We might all be asking ourselves, will I be able to keep that franchise player who has been with my team since the beginning? Will I be able to snatch that one player that will put my team into the playoffs? Out of the free agents I have which ones will go and which ones will stay? All of these questions will be answered soon enough. Please read through the constitution for the details on bidding. If you have any questions, please contact Kevin, Mark or myself.

## Rules Proposals

Thanks to all of you for submitting so many great league proposals this year. I will list below all of the proposals in case you forgot which proposal's is which. **Kevin will announce all of the final voting in his newsletter coming out shortly.** We will be updating the constitution as soon as is possible and let you know when it is updated on the web site.

### TOPIC 1: Updating BRASSball Dollar Amounts

In an effort to make the BRASSball dollars more closely approximate the value of MLB dollars, the following proposal has been put "on the table.

BRASSball has always striven to approximate the MLB experience as closely as is possible for a baseball simulation league. We use the same players, same ballparks, same player usage, same playoff structure, we used interleague play before it was "cool", we have a system of revenue sharing so there will be no "small market" teams, we play an All-Star Game, we have a free agency system, league history, league records, the whole thing. But we use different dollars. Our salary amounts are simply not realistic anymore as compared

with the MLB model. This proposal is intended to bring us more “in line” with the true costs of running a ML team.

A 1999 BRASSball buck is worth about fifty cents of what a 1999 MLB buck is worth (if that). BRASSball is still playing in about 1985, when the average MLB payroll (or the amount of revenue we all get each year to operate) was about \$17,000,000. The average MLB payroll last year was over \$35,000,000, double the amount BRASSball hands out to each team. We should change this...update it. And what a perfect time to do it. Exactly at the point when MLB dollars are about 2 times the value of BRASSball dollars. A problem which is easily solved by doubling every current BRASSball dollar amount. Right down the line. Make no changes in the framework of the league's systems or in the infrastructure of league's programs, but make a cosmetic updating of the dollar amounts to reflect the 1999 MLB world.

In short, let's do the following:

	<u>OLD</u>	<u>NEW</u>
yearly BBall franchise revenue:	\$17,000,000	\$35,000,000
double all present BBall bank accounts	\$ x	\$ 2 x
double dollar figures on all current contracts	\$ x	\$ 2 x
double dollar amounts for contract extensions	\$ x	\$ 2 x
double all fines	\$ x	\$ 2 x
Home/Road Discrepancy Program doubled	\$ x	\$ 2 x
double amount for initial 3 year contract	\$1,000,000	\$2,000,000
double amount for initial 4 year contract	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000
double amount for each additional year	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000
double all league salaries and newsletter	\$ x	\$ 2 x
items we forgot	\$ x	\$ 2 x

In addition, there are a few amounts we believe should stay the same, consistent with the current MLB models. These are:

- Σ amount for 1-year contract stays at \$200,000 (*this is about the MLB minimum salary already, doubling in **this** case is unrealistic*)
- Σ amount for minor league contract stays at \$100,000 (*this is a very well-paid minor leaguer already, wouldn't you say? If we double, BRASSball minor leaguers would earn more than the MLB minimum, also unrealistic.*)
- Σ amount for minor-major contract stays at \$100,000 (*consult explanations above*)
- Σ amateur contracts stay the same at \$50,000.
- Σ month-to-month contract amounts stay at \$35,000 (*as this is a pro-rated portion of a 1-yr. deal, it should keep the same (if this proposal passes further down on the ballot)*)

As for two-year contracts..... the most realistic MLB contract for the type of players one usually find under 2-year deals is at about \$500,000 per season, or \$1,000,000 total. Up from the present \$500,000 cost of a 2-year BRASSball contract.

The main thrust here is increased realism. And this system is more realistic with today's 1999 MLB scene without impacting anything except for the security blanket numerical amounts some of us long-timers are used to. For those of us who aren't so great at math and therefore feel a little skeptical of how doubling everything will affect them...the short answer is not at all.

The relationships of one amount in proportion to another in BRASSball stay exactly as they always have. No reason to mess with a good system. The relationship of BRASSball numbers to MLB numbers is the only thing changing. As long as we double everything (or triple it or quadruple it for that matter), nobody loses in relation to each other. And we all gain in realism.

Do you favor implementing this proposal?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ .

## **TOPIC 2: MONTH-TO-MONTH CONTRACT**

Do you favor adding the following as a rule in the Constitution?

A player who is on a roster but not signed to a major-league contract may be signed to a month-to-month contract. The team pays no money at the time of signing, but subsequently pays \$35,000 for each month that the player is on the 25-man, active major-league roster. The manager must inform his League Director which month-to-month players are being used; he sends this information along with his pitching rotation each month. At the end of the season for which a player was signed month-to-month, he becomes an unrestricted free agent. A player signed to a MTM contract during a given season is not eligible for post-season play.

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

## **TOPIC 3: CONTRACT REPORTS**

If a BRASSball owner fails to report a player's contract to his L.D. before playing this player in games, should the contract automatically be assumed to be one year?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

## **TOPIC 4: Revising Contract Costs**

At present, players who are signed to an (M0) deal are not "given credit" for the money already invested in that contract if they are to be signed to a Major League deal at a later point in the existing fiscal season.

A vote of "Yes" supports a revision to the wording in the Constitution about contract costs so that an existing Minor League deal counts toward any subsequent Major League deal signed in the existing fiscal season.

A vote of "No" supports the maintenance of the present contract system, which does not count an existing Minor League deal toward any subsequent Major League deal signed in the existing fiscal season.

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ .

### **Topic 5: Revising Contract Costs, Part II**

BRASSball contract structures work so that a contract is essentially "paid" to a player on a month-to-month basis as the season progressed. Thus, a 1A1 contract would only have \$100,000 left on it, not \$200,000, halfway through the BRASS season. What has been overlooked is applying this to Major League deals signed after the season has begun. For example, if a player has spent the first half of the season on an (M0) deal and the team owner wants to bring him to the Majors on a 1A1, he pays for the full season contract cost. This proposal contends that Major League deals signed during a season should not also cost the team owner money for the months already played during the season in question.

A vote of "Yes" supports closing this oversight in the implementation of contracts being paid on a monthly basis.

A vote of "No" keeps things just as they are

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ .

### **TOPIC 6: Secondary Free Agency Process:**

As a way for teams to acquire additional PA's and IP's after The Draft, the league should employ the following secondary free agency process. The L.D.'s should publish a list of undrafted, carded players in February. Any team who wishes to offer a contract to an undrafted, carded player may do so in a mailing to the person conducting the process, to be postmarked by February 25th. Contract offers can be for major league contracts of any length and must equal or exceed the major league minimum for the number of years offered. The major league contracts are considered to be "A" contracts, consistent with the contract status of those players selected in that year's Draft. A team may also bid any amount above the minimum on a one-year minor league (M0) contract if they wish for any player. Month-to-month major league contract bids are also accepted for any number of months. Again here the bid must at least equal the minimum contract amount for the given number of months offered. The Bid Superiority Chart will be employed to determine the winning bidders as with the regular free agency process. Do we want BRASSball to institute a secondary free agency process as described above?



Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic 7: Ballpark Revisions**

If you build your own park and later wish to change it by an amount within plus or minus 2 on all weather effects, the construction costs are \$1,250,000 (or 2.5 million if Topic #1 is adopted). Such a change can be made every season if you can afford it. Do you want the league to change the ballpark rule to have each owner be able to change his ballpark dimensions plus or minus 2 each year with a cost of \$1,250,000.00?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic 8: Getting More Usage From the BRASS Players on Minor League Contracts**

A player on a minor league contract, who has never been signed to a major league deal, may be called up to the active roster for a one month period for a fee of \$35,000 without changing his minor league contract status. Each player is eligible for up to three such call-ups, which may be used any time before his first major league contract is signed. The minor league contract designation of such players will be changed from M0 to M0-1 to M0-2 to M0-3 to denote how many call-ups have been used.

It is further proposed that the constitutional provision: "No player may be on an active roster under a minor league contract." be amended to add, "except for one month call-ups consistent with subparagraph (s) of this Article." This is a technical change that makes it consistent with the call up procedure.

YES, I like! \_\_\_\_\_

No...this stinks! \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic 9: Elimination of the "paying" of contracts during trades**

Currently, many BRASSball trades are consummated which involve players that the acquiring team simply cannot afford to pay with the available cash on hand. As a way around this, the two teams often agree that the contracts of the player(s) being traded will be considered to have been "paid"...thus avoiding the issue of whether or not the team can afford to "take on" the new player's remaining salary.

Should BRASSball adopt a rule that mandates a team MUST have the equivalent of 50% of the salary of the player to be acquired in its cash reserves for it to acquire a PAID player? This proposal does not require the acquiring team to actually PAY 50% of the player he acquires. Teams are still free to work out whatever financial arrangements they choose. This proposal simply would require the team to have in its current bank account 50% of the salary of the player(s) to be acquired.

I vote YES to this proposal \_\_\_\_\_

I vote NO to this proposal \_\_\_\_\_

### **TOPIC 10: CLOSER RULE**

10. Should BRASSball implement STRAT's CLOSER rule?

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

10A. If you voted yes, should the rule be implemented in 2000 or 2001?

2000 \_\_\_\_\_ 2001 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Trades**

**Box City** trades Barry Larkin and 750K to **Gem City** for Reggie Sanders and Gem City's # 3 pick in 2000.

**North Georgia** trades Cal Ripken and Armando Benitez to **Cook County** for Vinnie Castilla and Rob Nen. All contracts to be paid.

## **Upcoming Deadlines**

**November 10<sup>th</sup> ...** List of restricted and unrestricted free agents sent out by the Free Agency Conductor.

**November 25<sup>th</sup> ...** Sealed bids for free agents due to Free Agency Conductor.

**December 15<sup>th</sup> ...** Free agent signing report sent out by Free Agency Conductor.