

# MLB Regular Season Cut Could Get Tied To Changing Playoffs

CINCINNATI (AP) — Cutting the length of Major League Baseball's regular-season schedule could be tied to reconfiguring the postseason.

Baseball players are increasingly complaining of the toll of playing 162 games in 183 days. The schedule was 154 games before the AL added eight games when it expanded in 1961, and the National League adopted the new format when it added two teams for the 1962 season.

"A shortened schedule is a major, major economic issue," Commissioner Rob Manfred told the Baseball Writers' Association of America on Tuesday.

"We sell out in a lot of markets in terms of gates. The gates are really valuable to us. We have television commitments. Each local contract varies, but there are game guarantees that could be affected by a shortened season."

Baseball's national television contracts with Fox, ESPN and Turner run through the 2021 season and are based on the current format. The 30 teams have local broadcast deals that would be impacted by a schedule change.

"Usually when you have a big economic issue where you're giving up revenue, you got to figure out something that is offsetting in the other direction," Manfred said, "and the one obvious possibility is you make a change in terms of playoff format. I'm not suggesting that we're anywhere on either of those topics, but I do think if you shorten the season, there would be pressure to look at the postseason, as well."

Manfred said that in bargaining for a labor contract that starts with the 2016 season, management wanted to examine travel after Sunday night ESPN games, when players can arrive at their next destination at close to or past dawn.

"We're at a point in time where perhaps any number of things the guys are being asked to do are directly affecting the way they play, and that's not beneficial for anybody," union head Tony Clark said. "You're hoping at the end of the day that you can put your head on the pillow anywhere between 4 and 5 a.m."

Teams generally must have a day off when traveling from the Pacific Time Zone to the East, but players have complained about playing East Coast night games followed by West Coast night games the following day.

"I don't know that it's surprising that bodies are breaking down when you start to get to June, or you start to get to July, or guys are needing more breaks than they otherwise would," Clark said.

He also didn't think expanded rosters would solve this issue. "Those players are still going

to be traveling on the plane that is arriving at 4 or 5 in the morning," he said. "So you'll have more guys to choose from, but you'll just have more guys who are tired."

## Minnesota Congressional Delegation Proposes

### Killebrew Stamp

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minnesota's congressional delegation is urging the U.S. Postal Service to honor the legacy of Twins Hall-of-Famer Harmon Killebrew by putting him on a stamp.

Both of Minnesota's senators and all eight representatives have sent a joint letter to the USPS Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee urging it to honor the Twins' late home-run king, who was known for his good sportsmanship and his work for charities.

The letter says Killebrew's legacy on and off the field exemplifies the best of Minnesota and the nation.

Killebrew played for the Twins from 1961 to 1974. He retired in 1975 with 573 career home runs, more than any other right-handed hitter in American League history at the time. He was

inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1984. He died in 2011.

## MLB Hopes Rays, A's Can Get New Ballparks In Current Markets

CINCINNATI (AP) — Major League Baseball remains hopeful the Tampa Bay Rays and Oakland Athletics will be able to obtain new ballparks without relocating yet will examine other markets in case a team needs to move or the sport decides to expand.

Tampa Bay is last in the major leagues in average home attendance at 14,731 and Oakland is 26th at 22,369. Twenty-two of the 30 clubs have opened new stadiums since 1990, and the Rays and A's are the only teams currently seeking new homes.

Oakland owner Lew Wolff hoped for a new ballpark in San Jose, California, but was thwarted by the San Francisco Giants, whose territory includes Santa Clara County. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against San Jose in its antitrust suit against MLB, and the city has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the case.

## NASCAR Takes Positive Steps Toward Brighter Future

BY JENNA FRYER  
AP Auto Racing Writer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — What a different NASCAR we have now.

The sport so married to a dictator-style reign, so resistant to meaningful change and so slow to take a stance on anything that might alienate its fan base has seemingly been turned upside down in a matter of days.

In just the past month alone, chairman Brian France has taken a strong stance on a pair of social issues, including his desire to eliminate the Confederate flag at NASCAR events. His position is in stark contrast to NASCAR's Southern roots, and will be slow to be totally embraced by fans. And last week when Ben Kennedy, great-grandson of NASCAR founder Bill France Sr., was involved in an accident at Kentucky Speedway, nearly every replay featured a shot of "The Stars and Bars" waving at the bottom of the screen.

So it may take some time for NASCAR's position to make a meaningful difference, but France is strongly in favor of separating his series from the negative connotation of the flag regardless of how long it takes.

Same goes for improving the on-track product, which, by the way, looked a much improved Saturday night at Kentucky.

The race was the first for new rules packages that have been earmarked for trial at four different tracks. This package of lower downforce was specifically recommended by the drivers, who somehow persuaded NASCAR to allow them to form a panel that has engaged in meaningful discussion with series leaders.

Don't confuse the driver council with unionization, something NASCAR has never allowed. Curtis Turner and Tim Flock in 1961 were both banned for life — Turner's was eventually lifted — for trying to form the Federation of Professional Athletes and second-tier drivers were used at Talladega Superspeedway during a one-week boycott in 1969 as drivers tried to form the Professional Drivers Association.

But times have clearly changed, with three-time NASCAR champion Tony

# Turning Back The Clock



JEREMY HOECK/P&D  
Menno's Tom Sattler, at age 40, is one of the veterans of the South Central League. Sattler is in his 23rd season of amateur baseball.

## While League Getting Younger, Some Vets Still Dot SCL Rosters

BY JEREMY HOECK  
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For years, names like Gary Kortan, Steve Fejfar, Bill Guenther, Joe Sees and Tom Schlingen were synonymous with South Central League amateur baseball.

They were the old guys who kept at it. The veteran faces in a game that was getting progressively younger.

Mike King calls those guys a "lost breed."

"There are a lot of people who aren't willing to commit the time anymore," said the Irene veteran, who at 44 years old is the elder statesman of the league.

"It's sad. Even now, there are a lot of 30-year-olds that aren't playing anymore."

That has been trend in recent years across the SCL.

Of all the regular players in the 9-team league, there are only three at least 40 years old, according to a survey of each team's oldest player by the *Press & Dakotan*.

King is the oldest in the league, at 44, while Wynot's Lee Heimes and Menno's Tom Sattler are both 40. Freeman's Eric Hortness is 39, followed by Crofton's Aaron Losing (35) and Lesterville's Mike Pavel (33).

There are older players on league rosters (such as Yankton's Ron Heine, Wynot's Todd Pinkelman and Tabor's Joe Vavruska), but among regular players, the average ages are steadily declining.

King admits that he very nearly retired after playing in only three games last

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## While MLB Open To Pitch Clocks, Players' Union Opposed

CINCINNATI (AP) — Baseball management is intrigued with the idea of using pitch clocks to speed play in the major leagues. The players' association thinks it is a horrible idea.

Adopting rules requiring hitters to keep at least one foot in the batter's box and to put up clocks timing between-innings breaks led to the average time of a nine-inning game dropping to 2 hours, 53 minutes so far this season. That is down from 3:02 for the first half of 2014.

"We decided that we would undertake a rather modest set of changes this year," Commissioner Rob Manfred said Tuesday during a meeting with the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

"We also made a decision to make a significant investment to test the 20-second pitch clock further at Double-A and Triple-A. We are really encouraged by the results of that experiment in terms of how it moves the games along."

"Now how quickly that

experiment or whether that experiment migrates to the big league level is going to be a product of conversations with the MLBPA."

At Triple-A, the average time for a nine-inning game has dropped 15 minutes to 2:41 in the International League and 13 minutes to 2:45 in the Pacific Coast League.

At Double-A, the average has been cut 12 minutes to 2:38 in the Eastern League, 13 minutes to 2:39 in the Southern League and five minutes to 2:46 in the Texas League.

At lower levels, times range from a five-minute decrease (Carolina and Midwest) to a seven-minute increase (Pioneer, a short-season league whose season started last month).

Major League Baseball Players Association head Tony Clark, a former All-Star first baseman, made clear his members do not want pitch clocks. An agreement with the union would be needed to use them in the big leagues.

"The game is fundamentally different. The game is

fundamentally faster. There are more considerations that need to be made at the major level than at the Single-A level or the Double-A level or the Triple-A level," he said.

"We have heard from players who have played in the minor leagues and who have gotten up to the big leagues, and rest assured their experiences wouldn't suggest that they're bending over backward to implement the same thing up here that they are experiencing down there."

## Baseball: Yankton Post 12 Falls At Renner; Creighton Juniors Earn State Berth



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D  
Yankton Lakers catcher Michael Drotzmann, left, prepares to take the throw as Brookings' Trevor Berreth comes home during the opening game of their VFW Teener baseball doubleheader on Tuesday at Yankton's Bob Tereshinski Stadium at Riverside Field. Berreth was out on the play, but Brookings won 14-1 to end the Lakers' 10-game win streak. Brookings completed the sweep with a 15-9 decision in the nightcap.

## Lakers Swept By Brookings

RENNER — Renner took the lead in the second inning and didn't give it up, claiming an 11-7 victory over Yankton Post 12 in American Legion baseball action on Tuesday.

Luke Rysavy went 3-4 with a double and a home run, scoring four times and driving in two, to lead Renner. Cayden Veland also had three hits, driving in three runs. Mason Koch doubled and singled, and Josh Tornow had two hits in the victory.

For Yankton, which outthit Renner 15-12, Brad Ulmer went 3-5 with two doubles, two runs scored and a RBI, and Colin Muth went 3-4 with a double, a run scored and three RBI to lead the way. Sheldon Gant went 2-4 with a home run and two runs scored. Mason Townsend and Levi Schmidt each had two hits, with Schmidt posting a RBI and a run scored. Jordan Kathol, Landon Withrow and Austin

Johnson each had a hit in the effort.

Jackson Olson pitched six innings, allowing three runs, to pick up the win. Landon Withrow took the loss.

Renner, 20-23, finishes its regular season on Friday at Harrisburg. Yankton, 23-14, travels to Brandon Valley on Thursday, a 4 p.m. start.

### Crofton 4, Hartington 2

CROFTON, Neb. — Crofton completed a second straight sweep of the Elkhorn League with a 4-2 victory over Hartington in the American Legion Seniors tournament championship on Tuesday.

Austin Hegge had two hits, and Tristan Wieseler, Justin Mueller and Brady Stuckey each had a hit for Crofton.

Jared Wiebelhaus doubled and singled to lead Hartington. Seth Lacks and Ty Becker each had a hit.

Brock Mueller went the distance, striking out nine in the seven-inning contest, for the victory. Wiebelhaus took the loss.

Crofton, 18-6, travels to Pierce on Thursday.

### Platte-Geddes 14, McCook-Miner 0

CANOVA — Platte-Geddes pounded out 12 hits on the way to a 14-0 rout of McCook-Miner in American Legion baseball action on Monday.

Hunter Hallock had three hits, including a double, and four RBI to lead Platte-Geddes. Nate Spaw had two doubles, Allen Muilenburg doubled and singled, and Tanner Van Genderen and Riley Hoffman each had two hits in the victory.

Coleen Plooster picked up the win with three innings of shutout relief. Cole Cheeseman took the loss.

Platte-Geddes, 8-3, opens Region 4B play today (Wednesday) in Tabor, facing Gregory in the opening round. Start time is set for 5 p.m.

### Area C1 Juniors

#### Creighton 11-6,

#### Neligh-Oakdale 1-2

AINSWORTH, Neb. — Creighton beat Neligh-Oakdale twice on Tuesday to win

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