

Sports

In hopes of compromise

Owners call for meeting

United Press International
NEW YORK — A group of maverick owners, not satisfied at the way negotiations have progressed in the 25-day-old major-league baseball strike, has mustered enough support to succeed in arranging a meeting of all the owners in hopes of turning a few of the harder heads toward a compromise proposal.

While representatives of the striking players and the owners testified before the National Labor Relations Board Monday, the owners' Player Relations Committee said a meeting of the 26 club owners has been scheduled for 5 p.m. EDT Thursday in New York.

It takes three owners from one league to make a formal request for a meeting of all 26 owners, and baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn's office has received telegrams from eight owners requesting such a meeting. According to management sources, the eight are from the New York Yankees, Baltimore, Texas, Cleveland and Chicago White Sox of the American League and the New York Mets, Houston and San Diego in the National League.

An announcement released jointly by Lee MacPhail, the AL president and Charles Feeney, the NL president, said: "The meeting is being called by the Board of Directors of the Player Relations Com-

mittee in order to advise all clubs on the status of collective bargaining negotiations and the current NLRB proceedings.

"Attendance will be limited to two representatives of each major-league club plus members of the Board of Directors of the Player Relations Committee."

A few of the owners, such as Edward Bennett Williams of Baltimore, George Steinbrenner of the Yankees and Eddie Chiles of Texas, have made it clear in recent weeks they are unhappy at the way negotiations have been handled, and are expected to try and sway the others toward a softer stand.

Williams was vehement Monday that the owners must get off their high horse and try to end the strike.

"Look, baseball is right now in its biggest crisis since the (1919) Black Sox scandal and it is no time to sit by and do nothing," Williams said. "After the way the negotiations went this weekend, we have to do something."

The player representatives from the 26 teams also will meet tonight in New York for a progress report.

Meanwhile, the players are continuing to seek a ruling from the NLRB that the owners have bargained in bad faith by refusing to open their financial records to player inspection.

An administrative law judge listened to four hours of testimony Monday and the hearing is set to resume today at 9:30 a.m. It is expected to continue for several days.

While the NLRB hearing is being conducted, there is unlikely to be any negotiation session since the key members from both sides are tied up with the hearing.

The talks broke off July 4 when players rejected the latest proposal by the owners on free agent compensation, which limited to 12 the number of free agents in any one year who would require compensation. The dispute had caused the cancellation of 309 games through Monday.

Federal mediator Kenneth Moffett said that he would not resume the talks unless there was hope of progress, and the NLRB hearing has further complicated the issue.

Presiding over the current hearing is Chief Administrative Law Judge Melvin Welles, an apparently big baseball fan who asked the players in attendance, Bob Boone of Philadelphia and Mark Belanger of Baltimore, for autographs.

If the judge rules against the players, the players will appeal the decision in the Court of Appeals.

The hearing at the NLRB is virtually killing any chance the All-Star Game could be played as scheduled on July 14 in Cleveland.

Former Ranger owner says agents are major cause of baseball strike

United Press International
NEW YORK — Brad Corbett doesn't have to worry about a gag rule anymore.

He never paid much attention to it anyway when he was a big-league owner and now that he isn't any longer, it concerns him even less.

When the former owner of the Texas Rangers has something to say, he comes right out and says it, and what he's saying now is the players aren't that much to blame for the baseball strike.

"I don't think the players are as bad as some of their agents," Corbett makes a distinction. "I think the agents are one of the causes for the strike. You can't believe how much they lie. Ninety-nine per cent of what they tell you is what you'll find on the bottom of your bird cage."

Corbett ran the Rangers for seven years. He got out of baseball last year, selling his interest so he could devote all his time to his thriving plastic pipe business in Fort Worth, Texas, and that was where he was talking from now.

"I really feel sick about the strike," he was saying. "Both sides are losing and above all, the fans are losing. The thing that worries me is that I don't see how the owners can give in anymore. That's all they've been doing for the last few years. When do the players begin giving in a little, too?"

Corbett, who didn't always agree with his fellow owners during the time he was in baseball, is not opposed to free agency from which the present issue of compensation has evolved.

"If you want free agency, have sealed bids instead of the way you have it now, where the agents im-

mediately become involved and create the kind of chaos that has resulted in this strike," he says.

"They try to make it seem they're looking out for the player but they know, and you know, they're only looking out for themselves."

Corbett's sealed-bid proposal for free agents wouldn't eliminate all agents entirely but would cut down on the lopsided sphere of influence they enjoy now. When a player would become a free agent, any or all clubs interested in him would send in sealed bids for his services and in that way there would be no middle man playing off one owner against the other as is presently the case.

"Many players who become free agents today tell you they only want to play in California. They say they have a right to choose where they want to live. They never say that when they start out in the minors. If they get a chance to go up to the majors, they're tickled to play anywhere. But after awhile, they get more choosy. That's when you start hearing from their agents. Why, all of a sudden, when the players become superstars do they have to be the ones who dictate in what cities they should play?"

Corbett points out one of the primary objects of big league baseball is to bring the game to the fans in all cities of both circuits.

"The fans in Cleveland are just as important as the fans in California or New York and they deserve to be able to go out and watch a competitive team as well as anyone else," he said. "The fans complain about the owners. I can't understand why they don't complain about those players who ob-

ject to playing in their cities."

"What about the fans in those cities?" Corbett asks. "Aren't they entitled to go out and see first-class ballplayers for the money they pay? The superstars say they want to be with a winner, so they sign with one and make it stron-

ger. Then they talk about 'competitive balance.'"

Corbett believes the baseball strike will be settled.

"When, I don't know," he says. "I don't think anyone else knows, either."



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Champs to sign contract for long-awaited fight

United Press International
NEW YORK — Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns officially puts out a contract on Sugar Ray Leonard today.

Hearns, the World Boxing Association's welterweight champion, and World Boxing Council champ Leonard will announce their long-awaited bout at a midtown press conference.

The conference was scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. EDT.

The 15-round fight is slated for Sept. 16, probably in Caesars Palace at Las Vegas, Nev., and Hearns will get \$5 million, with Leonard receiving \$8 million. With additional percentages, however, Leonard can earn as much as \$13 million and Hearns more than \$10 million.

Hearns, from Detroit, is 32-0 with 30 knockouts and is regarded as one of the best welterweight punchers of recent years. Leonard, of Palmer Park, Md., is 30-1 with 21 knockouts and has won accolades as a master boxer with a classic style.

The fight is being promoted by Shelly Finkel, whose background mainly has been rock music promotions. The contract will have no mention of a championship to avoid problems with the rival WBA and WBC.

Hearns knocked out Pablo Baez of the Dominican Republic in the fourth round at Houston on June 25 to retain the title he won with a second-round knockout of Pipino Cuevas in August, 1980.

Leonard, who avenged his only career loss and regained his title with an eighth-round TKO of Roberto Duran last November,

also won the WBA junior middleweight title by stopping previously unbeaten Ayub Kalule in nine rounds on the same Houston card. Leonard is the only current double champion in boxing.

The only champion recognized by both the WBA and WBC is middleweight Marvin Hagler.

The anticipation for a Hearns-Leonard showdown has been building for almost a year, and September bout will feature matchup of contrasting styles although Leonard abandoned fluid manner and slugged a toe-to-toe with Kalule, as he did with Duran in the first main-

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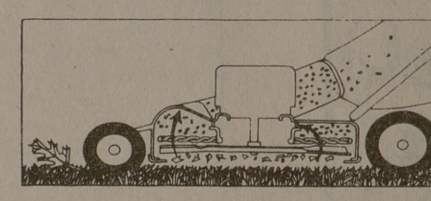


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