

SPORTS

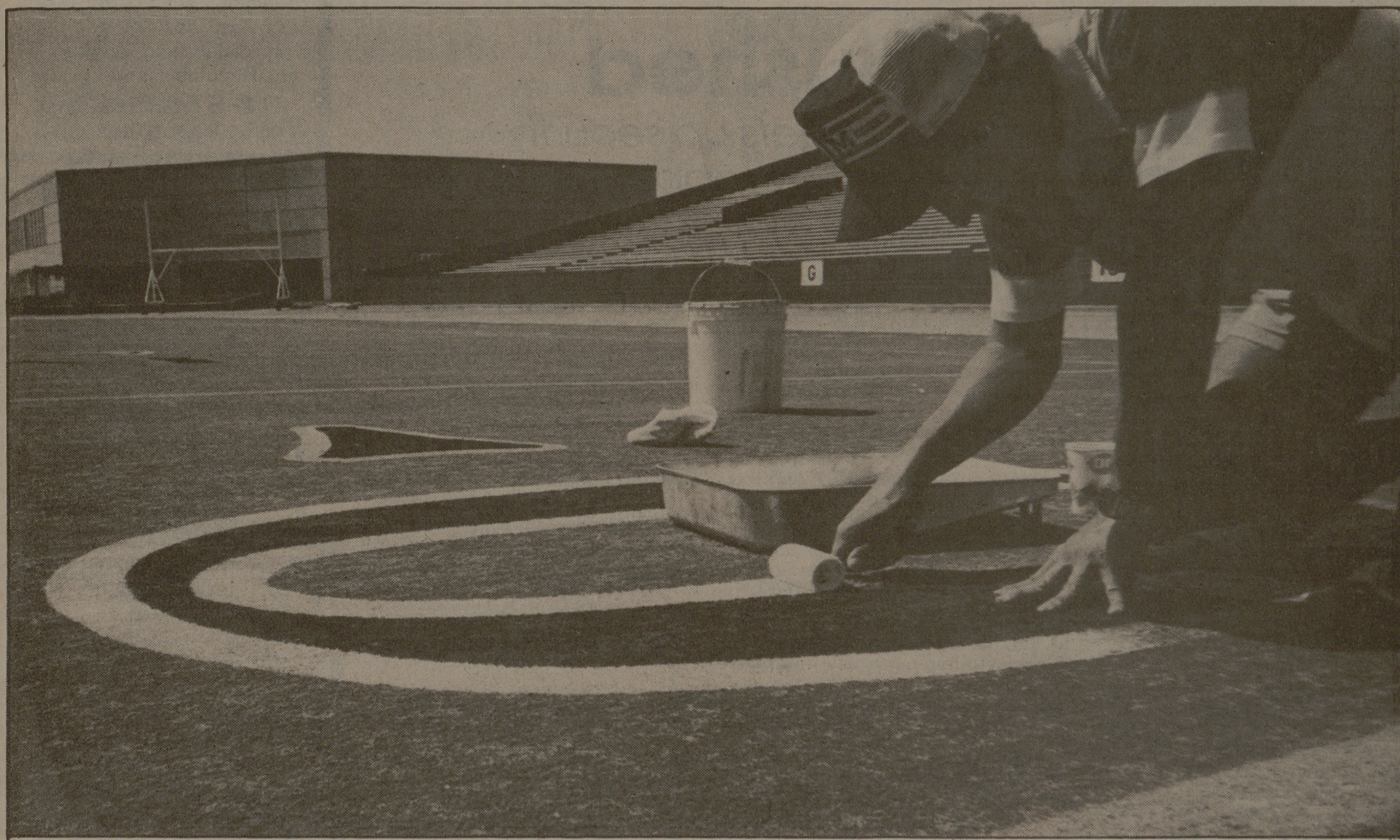


Photo by SCOTT SUTHERLAND

Ask Sherman Williams

Steve Blavier, a manager for the Texas A&M football team, gives Kyle Field its annual artificial turf facelift. Blavier is in the process

of painting all the yard-line stripes and numbers in preparation for the report of the Aggies' freshman recruits later in August.

Major Leaguers to 'Play ball'

Strike ends in less than a day

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The baseball strike ended Wednesday, 25 games down and the pennant races to go.

"There was integrity on both sides," Commissioner Peter Ueberroth said in formally announcing a strike-ending contract, "and that's why we have an agreement today."

"This agreement was done by Lee MacPhail and Don Fehr," he said. "They put baseball back on the field."

Announcement of a tentative agreement on a new five-year contract came from the commissioner's office at about 1:30 p.m., less than 24 hours after baseball's second midseason strike formally began.

Clubs were told immediately to prepare for business on Thursday, resulting in two lost days of games, 25 in all or a little more than 1 percent of the season.

Some teams rapidly planned to make up the lost games. Scheduled as Thursday double-headers were Baltimore at Toronto, Boston at Chicago, Cleveland at New York, Detroit at Kansas City, and Milwaukee at Texas.

The agreement, coming after nearly nine months of negotiations but crafted principally in the final 24 hours, provides concessions on both sides — to the players in the form of increased pension money and to the owners in the form of modifications in salary arbitration.

Neither Don Fehr, acting head of the players association, nor Lee MacPhail, the owners' chief bargainer, would immediately confirm the announcement from Commissioner Peter Ueberroth's office.

"The commissioner's office can announce whatever it wants," Fehr said. "I'm not confirming it or denying it."

However, Peter Bavasi, president of the Indians, said: "We've been told

to report for duty tomorrow."

Scott McGregor, player representative for the Baltimore Orioles, said: "They have come to an agreement. Now, it's a matter of getting it down on paper and getting it ratified. I'm ecstatic about it. It's a big relief."

Thirteen games Tuesday and 12 Wednesday were lost to the strike, compared with the 712 games lost to a 50-day strike in 1981.

The contract reportedly was for five years, through the life of baseball's \$1.1 billion network television deal. While terms of the agreement were not announced, one team player rep, who asked not to be identified, said they included:

- No cap on salary arbitration awards. Management had demanded a 100 percent cap on all arbitrator's awards, meaning a player could no more than double his salary. This issue had to be dropped before any settlement could occur.

- A player must have three instead of two years' service to file for arbitration. This was the major union concession to owners. The three-year clause will not take effect until the third year of the contract, effectively skipping all current major league players.

- The owners' annual pension contribution will rise from \$15.5 million to an average of \$32.7 million per year. The payment for 1985 will be \$27 million, escalating each year of the contract until it reaches \$37 million in the final year. In addition, \$14 million will be added to the 1984 contribution retroactively. Players had asked for \$60 million, and part of the difference, about \$20 million per year, will be redirected to financially troubled clubs, resulting in baseball's first venture into revenue sharing.

- The free-agent re-entry draft was eliminated, allowing a player to negotiate with any team as soon as he becomes a free agent.

Snow actual reason for baseball strike

The latest baseball strike. You've probably heard the usual, published reasons for the strike. Well folks, I'm here to tell you it's a lie, a fake, a sham, baseball's biggest wooden nickle.

The stories splashed across your favorite newspapers tell of the baseball owner's wish to put a cap on salaries, to change the current arbitration process and minimize their contributions to the player's pension fund.

The player's union counters that they want to get a fair slice of the television revenue pie and protect their right to earn what they want.

Well, just erase all that baseball sludge from your brain because that ain't what caused the strike. When this comes out, I have a feeling that it may start a revolution.

Snow.

That's right, snow is what this whole mess is about. Not you're ordinary, run-of-the-mill, All-American variety, but a totally different strain that flutters down from north of the border.

ED CASSAVOY

Sports Writer

You see, this is a well-organized plot by a single organization in baseball to assure them of a World Series victory.

The Toronto Blue Jays are the culprits. These twisted geniuses have worked it all out.

Currently the Jays are atop the American League East and strong contenders for the AL pennant. But, see, they had to hedge their bet. Nothing is certain, especially when it comes to the Jays, or baseball for that matter.

So they work out this plan, see. When the '01 World Series comes around (with the Jays in it of course) it will be October — in Toronto, Canada.

Cold, but not cold enough for the liking of the Blue Jays' management.

Why not up the ante? Why not trigger a short baseball strike in beginning of August that will help the Jays' quest?

So the strike ends within a couple of days, the schedule is rearranged to make up for the lost games and the World Series is pushed back later in October.

The words 'later in October' are music to the ears of those northern crows, I mean Jays.

Now the the ice will be a uniform 12 inches on top of the artificial turf of Exhibition Stadium, perched conveniently on the edge of Lake Ontario.

Convenient for the Jays, that is. Ah, I almost can see it, the fans huddled miserably in blankets, trying to duck most of that icy Arctic air, whistling off the lake.

The poor Los Angeles "Doggers" trying to layer their suntan lotion thicker on their exposed skin to serve as an insulator. What a beautifully horrible sight.

ABC camera men, perched with minicams on the flag poles, welded

solid to their icy video stations.

And the sad sack "Doggers" flopping and sliding their way to World Series oblivion. Baseball turns into "Iceball."

The Jays on the other hand, glide to a Toronto sweep on their Langie skates, generously donated by the Toronto Maple Leafs.

In the day's where the other foolish players sat around the pool getting fat and lazy, the lean mean Blue Jays were practicing their skating skills at a secret location in Iceland.

They told those dumb Icelanders that it was a new NATO exercise, so they were left alone.

So it went, bunting, stealing bases, sharpening skates and treating frost bite. But everyone knew it would pay off.

And Cassavoy predicts it will. But I'd like to see it come about for another reason. Just imagine the scene when the chant goes up "Slide, Garcia, slide!" as he tries to beat the throw to home plate.

Then I figure you'd really see who wanted to win the baddest.

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