

Yankees' Mondesi trade hurts baseball

On Monday, the New York Yankees continued to show the rest of Major League Baseball just how much of a gap exists between its pocket-book and the rest of the league's.

New York's swap for Raul Mondesi, who was traded to the Yankees on Monday for a Double-A relief pitcher, represents everything that is wrong in the game of baseball.

Mondesi, who makes \$13 million a season, will put the Yankee's payroll at over \$133 million, more than double its payroll of \$65 million in 1998.

At this rate, the Yankees will have a payroll of over \$250 million by 2006 with no end in sight. Meanwhile, the rest of the league is struggling to make ends meet, forced to trade off its most valuable players so the owners in the luxury boxes stay in the luxury boxes, away from the cheap seats and \$6 beer.

The amount of money it takes to pay these outrageous salaries is too much for most other teams, who raise concession and ticket prices in order to keep up with the "Jones" of MLB.

The gap continues to grow between the rich and poor teams of MLB. Compare the Tampa Bay Devil Rays' payroll of \$22.6 million to the Yankees' \$130+ million.

How does a team like New York make so much money? Simple. TV revenue for the Yankees in 2001 was over \$70 million. Montreal brought in just \$700,000, barely enough to pay

the beer guy. Meanwhile, the Expos play in front of a crowd that would be put to shame by a Saturday afternoon game at Olsen Field.



DALLAS SHIPP

The Devil Rays and Expos are not the only teams that cannot measure up to the Yankees payroll. Even middle market teams like the Houston Astros cannot compete year in and year out despite their \$63 million payroll, which four years ago would have been at the top of the list. Now it is in the middle of the pack.

Astros pitcher Billy Wagner said it best in an interview concerning the Astros recent struggles.

"Let's see how the Yankees would do if you kept taking pieces away," Wagner said. "We say, 'We want to be champions.' Well, you can't be champions when you're putting young, inexperienced guys out there and asking them to play above their means right now. We're putting them in tough situations."

However, inexperienced young rookies are all the Astros — and many teams around the league — can afford thanks to rising salaries encouraged by huge free-agent signings, such as the Yankees' off-season acquisition of Jason Giambi. New York signed Giambi to a multi-year contract worth over \$120 million.

Attendance around the league is down substantially this season and will continue to drop until something drastic is done to keep

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Williams lands in semifinals

Henin ousts Seles, Krajicek-Phillippousis postponed

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Venus Williams raced in behind a stinging approach shot, all 6-foot-1 of her poised at the net.

Her opponent barely got to the ball and spun a stroke wide, giving Williams a break point during their Wimbledon quarterfinal on a rainy, windy Tuesday.

"Game, Miss Williams," the chair umpire said.

Well, not quite — that was the proper call a point later, when Williams planted a forehead winner right on the baseline.

It is tough to keep track of the score when the top-seeded Williams is at her best.

The two-time defending champion beat 48th-ranked Russian Elena Likhovtseva 6-2, 6-0 in just 47 minutes, taking her total court time to little more than 4 1/2 hours in five matches.

While she overwhelmed yet

another unheralded opponent for a 19th straight victory at the All England Club, 2001 runner-up Justine Henin overcame Monica Seles for the first time in five tries, 7-5, 7-6 (4). Williams and Henin will meet in a semi-final.

"It's going to be tough for me. Especially on grass courts, she's playing so well," Henin said. "She won her matches so easily. So I know it's going to be difficult. You know what happened last year." Williams beat the Belgian in three sets for the title.

The other semifinal's participants will be decided Wednesday. Venus' sister, French Open champion Serena, will play No. 11

Daniela Hantuchova in one quarterfinal, while Jennifer Capriati faces No. 9 Amelie Mauresmo in another.

No. 3 Capriati advanced to the final eight when her rain- and darkness-delayed fourth-round match against Eleni Daniilidou was finally completed Tuesday. Capriati won 6-1, 3-6, 6-1.

The match, called Monday at a set apiece, resumed just before 6 p.m. after a series of rain delays and was moved from Court 1 to Court 18 to ensure it could be completed.

"The player today and yesterday was completely different," said Capriati, who huddled in a towel between changeovers to brace against temperatures in

the 50s and winds topping 25 mph. "In that second set, she was playing pretty unbelievable. It would have been very tough to beat her if we would have kept playing."

Play was stopped at 7 p.m., leaving a men's match unfinished. Richard Krajicek, the last Wimbledon champion left in the tournament, and Mark Philippoussis split the first four sets — all tiebreakers — of a fourth-round match. They'll resume Wednesday.

The winner faces No. 27 Xavier Malisse, who completed his 3-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory over No. 23 Greg Rusedski. That fourth-round match was halted Monday after the fourth set, and Malisse wrapped things up by breaking the Canadian-turned-Briton in the seventh game of the final set.

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S. Korea, Japan benefit from World Cup

TOKYO (AP) — The World Cup brought good news to some. Digital TV sales, the thirst for beer and a craving for jerseys of blue and red, the team colors for co-hosts Japan and South Korea, all shot up during the monthlong tournament.

The tournament, which ended Sunday, also delivered a bit of economic blues. While sports pubs everywhere and boxed-lunch stores near stadiums were booming, restaurants and travel suffered as nearly everyone turned into a homebody to watch the games on TV.

And a big event comes with a big bill.

Security and other World Cup-related expenses at team camp sites are expected to cost local communities millions of dollars. Although the tally is not yet final, the town of Tsuna, the camp site for the English team, is preparing to foot a bill of about \$750,000.

Maintaining Miyagi stadium, where three World Cup games were played, will cost the prefecture \$2.3 million a year. As with other stadiums, prospects for turning profits at Miyagi are slim. Only one professional soccer game is

scheduled there this season.

It's too early for a precise count of how the pluses stack up against the minuses for both Japan and South Korea, where tough economic times had stirred hopes for a little help from the World Cup.

On the negative side, ticket distribution problems, which left thousands of empty seats at the games, are still under investigation and have left a sour after-taste. Attendance at the games totaled 2.7 million, short of the 2.8 million tickets

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