



doug
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• talking sports

Two strikes? You're outta here!

Forget three strikes and you're out. Two strikes is more than enough.

If the baseball players of the major leagues go on strike again this year, it will be the end of baseball. Oh, it will stick around for awhile, a translucent specter of what it once was, but it won't last.

Fans just won't care anymore. And who can blame us? I used to be the biggest fan of the sport. I could name the starting lineups of all 26 teams, and kept a pretty good record in my head of the stats of the star players. I pored over the box scores on the sports page, and dreamed of playing ball when I grew up.

Unfortunately, I have to concentrate to stand upright without falling, so a career where I was required to run, jump and throw was out of the question.

In high school I didn't even make the junior varsity team, but it wasn't through lack of effort. I went out every day and gave it everything I had. I woke up in the morning and had to roll out of bed. My muscles were so sore I couldn't bend.

The coach told us at the beginning of tryouts that it didn't matter how much talent we had, if we didn't hustle, we wouldn't make the team. I thought, "Great! Maybe that means if I hustle, even without any talent, I can play ball."

So I hustled, and I shook my head when I saw guys, kids who could really play, loaf through practices. "What a waste," I thought. "These guys have so much talent, and they won't be able to play."

Well, I didn't make the team, but guess who did.

Maybe that's the problem with the guys who want to go on strike now. These are the guys who never hustled, and never had a true love of the game. They got by just by being able to play.

Think about it. They play baseball for a living. How much better could it get?

The minimum league salary, which goes to guys barely hanging on, just one bad game from being shipped back to the minors, is over \$100,000. Forget about the money, though.

They get paid to stand in the batters box. They tune out the crowd and study the pitcher. Is his arm an inch higher? Is his stance a little tighter? Is it a fastball, or is he going to try to fake me with a breaking ball?

They get paid to stand in the outfield. They watch the batters stance and anticipate where the ball is going to fly. They can tell by the swing, sometimes not even waiting for the crack of the bat, whether it's a grounder, or heading for the fence.

They get paid to stand on the mound. They stare down the batter, and try to remember if he is a first-pitch batter, like Ted Williams, or if he always takes the first pitch, assuming it will be a ball because the pitcher is ahead on the count. They communicate silently with the pitcher, wind up, and let it fly with astounding speed and accuracy.

They work full-time jobs, no doubt of that, and they spend a lot of time away from their families and their homes. They put in a lot of work and effort. But listen to this: they get to play baseball for a living!

Now they want to go on strike, and alienate the fans who pay to see them perform. Last time they went on strike, in 1994, was just after I failed to make my high school team. Here I was, willing to do just about anything to get on the team, already practicing and getting ready for next year, and these grownups started whining they weren't getting everything they wanted, and they canceled the World Series.

Full grown, maybe, but definitely not grownups. I lost interest in baseball, and refused to even watch it for years. I would leave the room if a game came on the television. Hell hath no, well, you know.

Now they want to do it again. Players plan to meet on July 8, the day before the All-Star game, and they might set a strike date. Sept. 15 has been mentioned in a lot of newspapers.

They have the power, and maybe they believe their cause is just. I doubt if anybody else, except possibly the lawyers, are glad these millionaire babies are trying to get more money. World War II couldn't kill the World Series, but avarice did. Will it do it again?

If it does, it will signal the end of the national past-time. The sport made a comeback after the last travesty. Cal Ripken's struggle for the title of the Iron Man, and Mark MacGuire and Sammy Sosa battling to eclipse the 61* home run season record helped bring back bandwagon fans.

I doubt a miracle is left which would save this sport. It really doesn't bother me, though.

Little league games are more fun to watch anyway.

Kids learn golfing basics twice a week

By Doug Stephens
The Goodland Daily News

Twice a week, 35 Goodland kids head out to the golf course and try to perfect their swings.

Junior golf lessons are given every Tuesday and Thursday morning, weather permitting, at Sugar Hills Golf Club. It started the first week of June, and lasts for five weeks. The instructors are Connie Livengood and Steve Raymer, golf coaches for Goodland High School.

The kids, who are as young as six and as old as 13, learn the basics. They learn how far the different clubs hit, and some of them scratch their heads when they learn that the lower the number of the club, the farther the ball will fly.

"That doesn't make any sense," a young boy mutters to himself.

The coaches mostly work on the kids' swings, and making sure they understand the rules of the game, or at least a general understanding of the rules.

"I like to say there are 10 basic rules," Raymer said. "If you know those, you are pretty safe and can play anywhere."

This morning, instruction started at the driving range, and then the kids were split up at skill stations, where they worked on a particular aspect of the game. From there it was off to the putting green, and after that they got to play the course.

Raymer and Livengood aren't trying to make the young golfers experts, and the next Tiger Woods may not be out here, but that's OK.

"Basically, we are getting them to fall in love with the game," Raymer said. "It is a lifelong sport."

One of the members of the program, Ryan Gausman, 13, says he's a big fan of golf. He's been playing since he was 8-years old, he said, and although football is his favorite sport, he enjoys hitting the links.

"Yeah, it's fun," he said, "as long as I'm winning."

Golf is not available as a sport at the junior-high level, he said, or else he would have played. Instead, he'll have to wait until he gets to high school.



Austin Burkett, 6 and a first grader next year, took a practice swing before the junior golf lessons started this morning at Sugar Hills Golf Club.
Photo by Doug Stephens/The Goodland Daily News

Several other kids said they plan on playing once they get to high school, including his sister, Chelsea, 10.

"This is really fun, and the coaches are great," she said. "I can't wait to play for the Cowgirls."

Chelsea, who also started playing when she was 8, said her whole family likes golfing.

"It's been in our family for generations," she said.

Brian Guyer, 10, says his dad introduced him to the game when he was only 6. If his dad has been teaching him for four years, is he learning anything from the coaches?

"Oh yeah, they're great. They are really good at teaching you the proper way to do things."

The program has been around for a long time, Raymer said.

"I've been (in Goodland) for nine years," he said, "and it was here when I got here. The club is really great about supporting these young golfers."

City many sell trash service to Colorado Springs company

TRASH, from Page 1

Although the company has recycling programs in other cities, it does not plan to run one here, DiVello said.

The company is also trying to buy the Sherman County landfill and transfer station. In order for the proposed deal to go through with the city, the company has to be able to buy those from the county.

If the county won't sell, DiVello said, his company might still come up with an offer for the city, but the amount of purchase would be lower.

It works the other way, too. If the city won't sell its trash services, the company won't buy the landfill.

The company is also asking that the county get rid of its solid waste fee for Goodland residents and businesses.

Current solid waste employees of the city and county would be kept on immediately after the purchases, DiVello said, but the proposal says that only employees which "meet or exceed our standards," will be retained.

"We have no intention of laying anybody off," DiVello said after the meeting. "That is not what we want to do."

The company wants a 10-year exclusive contract, and DiVello says that it won't raise its prices without consulting with the city first.

"If we do raise rates," he said, "it would be tied to a rise in the cost of living."

The offer for the city's equipment is fair, Pickman said.

"It is just as good as what we could get on the open market," he said.

Pickman said he sees two advantages to taking the offer. Fees would go down for residents and for the city, and worker's compensation insurance rates would go down. The city has filed several claims recently for solid waste workers who have

been hurt on the job.

The city made its last payment on the lease for its garbage trucks this morning, Pickman said, and now owns them free and clear. Even so, the city's solid waste division will barely break even next year, he said, because of the number of workers employed.

"What we have been doing is paying for it out of general funds to keep the cost down," Pickman said.

The company doesn't plan on separating the trash that will go into the dump, DiVello said. A bag of grass clippings can go in with a toaster or a load of plastic laundry baskets, he said.

The only problem the company would have is if too much trash comes out to the landfill in one year, and then they could ship it to one of their other landfills in Colorado Springs or Pueblo, Colo.

In answer to a question from Commissioner Rick Billinger, DiVello said trash from Colorado would not end up being shipped to Goodland.

The company might look into upgrading the Sherman County landfill by adding extra lining, DiVello said.

"Certain items, like construction debris, would have to be handled separately, either picked up or hauled out," DiVello said, "but everything except hazardous waste would end up at the landfill."

Anything? How about a refrigerator, Billinger asked.

"If you can fit it in a dumpster, we'll take it," DiVello said, adding that in the case of a refrigerator, the freon would have to be taken out of it first.

The commissioners expressed interest in the idea, and unanimously voted to allow the city staff to work on negotiations with the company.

"I sure am interested in getting out of the trash business," Commissioner Curtis Hurd said.

Greenline 2 x 9.5 in back

Detroit coach says thanks to his team, fans and family

DETROIT (AP) — With his Stanley Cup champion Red Wings standing close behind him, retiring coach Scotty Bowman looked out on a sea of cheering fans and said thank you.

Bowman, who led the Wings to their third NHL title in six years, thanked his team for a season where it all came together and he thanked his family.

Finally, the 68-year-old thanked the Detroit fans — who police said turned out more than a million strong Monday — for their role in the team's victories and his historic career.

"I can leave being a Red Wing for the rest of my life," Bowman told the red and white clad throng packed into downtown's Hart Plaza for a victory rally.

It was a celebration where cheers of "one more year" outnumbered the traditional chant of "Let's go Red Wings." With handmade signs and their voices, fans implored the team's aging superstars like goalie Dominik Hasek to return for a shot at another championship.

"This is too much pressure," Hasek told the fans after hoisting the Cup on stage during the rally and kissing it one more time. "Don't put so much pressure on me."

But the loudest cheers were for Bowman, whose nine Stanley Cups — five with Montreal, three with the Red Wings and one with Pittsburgh — make him one of the most successful coaches in professional sports history.

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