

Baseball's back, Fantasy

If players won't play, then we will

By GARY PETERSON
N.L. Fantasy Commissioner

What it came down to was this: baseball players and owners are unable to put a game on the field, so we've decided to do it for them.

Okay, we can't put a game on the field either. But we can put one on the table. So that's basically what we've done.

Of course, we needed a little help. We got it from a game called Strat-O-Matic and four ambitious Danville youngsters — Neil Pearlstein, Craig Meier, John Hawkins and Scott McKeon.

Together, we've set out to play each regularly scheduled major league game cancelled by the current strike.

This, naturally, presents a bushel of problems. The first was the time it took to coordinate this project. By the time we'd set up the ground rules, selected the participants and established co-commissioners, the strike had gobbled up in excess of 200 games.

Since we needed to keep four to five days ahead of the actual schedule, it meant an extra 100 or so games had to be played. What resulted from all this lost time was an amazing week in which the guys had to pump out a total of 300 games — an average of 11 games per person per day.

These fellows are incredibly prolific Strat-O players. They whipped out seven games in the very first hour of the project, then apologized, saying they'd get faster as soon as they got used to the new scoresheets we'd supplied them with.

Even so, at eight games per hour, the 300-game load we'd laid on them translated into more than 37 hours of action. What a work week. It also translated into roughly 48,000 rolls of the dice, or about 1,700 rolls per person per day.

We told the guys this. We told them that there was always the chance they'd get 299 games into it only to have the strike settled and the project halted.

Then we asked if they were sure they wanted to go through with it. They never blinked an eye. So much for that problem.

After that, the roadblocks were simply mechanical. Each year, Strat-O-Matic puts out a new set of cards, statistically based on each player's performance the previous season.

Thus, this year's cards, based on last year's performances, didn't take trades and free agency into account. John Montefusco was still on the Giants, Dave Winfield was still on the Padres, etc.

So the rosters had to be adjusted. Then,

Welcome...

We just couldn't take a summer without baseball. Since the players won't play, we will. Using Strat-O-Matic cards, the Valley Times is playing each game cancelled by the current strike. The results and standings will appear here daily.

To Fantasy Diamond

two rookies had to be located.

Since they spent most of last season in the minors, Fernando Valenzuela and Tim Lincecum have no cards in the current edition of Strat-O-Matic. This, too, turned out to be an imminently solvable dilemma.

The guys informed us, after considerable research, that based on his performance through the strike this year, Valenzuela bore a striking resemblance to the 1978 Rich Gossage card. So they made Gossage a left-handed starter instead of a right-handed reliever, and plunked him in the Dodgers' starting rotation.

Raines had all the characteristics of the 1979 Al Bumbry card. His base-stealing capability had to be upgraded slightly, but once that was done, the Expos had a leadoff hitter.

Now there are undoubtedly those of you who will claim that playing this year's games with last year's cards takes the accuracy out of the game. We disagree.

Anyone who's played table top baseball can attest that statistics are just a part of what makes these games so fun. The good players usually do well, and the bad players usually stink, but certain cards seem to take on personalities of their own.

"I don't know what's wrong with Jack Clark," Neil moaned earlier this week. "He has a great card, but I just can't roll that guy."

Translated: Clark had a great year last year, but don't expect to see him in our All-Star game.

Yeah, we're going to have one of those. And if the strike lasts long enough, we'll have playoffs and a World Series. Maybe even MVP and Cy Young awards, and possibly a season-ending banquet.

Because what this is mostly is an exercise in fun. Goodness knows we can all use a few laughs right about now.

Fantasy Diamond standings

NATIONAL LEAGUE WEST

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Los Angeles	50	27	.649	—
Cincinnati	46	30	.605	3½
Houston	39	37	.513	10½
San Francisco	40	39	.506	11
Atlanta	36	39	.480	13½
San Diego	32	44	.421	17½

EAST

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Philadelphia	46	30	.605	—
Montreal	42	33	.560	3½
St. Louis	39	33	.542	5
Pittsburgh	29	38	.433	12½
New York	26	46	.361	18
Chicago	22	50	.314	22

Thursday's games

San Francisco 5, Atlanta 3
San Diego 8, Los Angeles 4
Montreal 7, Pittsburgh 2
Philadelphia 2, St. Louis 1
New York 3, Chicago 2

Today's games

Los Angeles (Valenzuela 13-4) at San Francisco (Blue 9-5)

Atlanta (PNiekro 6-5) at Houston (JNiekro 7-7)

Cincinnati (Seaver 10-1) at San Diego (Mura 7-9)

St. Louis (Martinez 5-5) at Chicago (Bird 8-2)

New York (Jones 3-9) at Pittsburgh (Rhoden 6-3)

Montreal (Palmer 3-1) at Philadelphia (Proly 3-2)

Saturday's games

Los Angeles at San Francisco
Atlanta at Houston
Cincinnati at San Diego
St. Louis at Chicago (2)
New York at Pittsburgh
Montreal at Philadelphia

AMERICAN LEAGUE WEST

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Oakland	51	30	.630	—
California	43	35	.551	6½
Texas	41	34	.546	7
Chicago	37	35	.514	9½
Kansas City	32	37	.464	13
Minnesota	27	47	.365	15½
Seattle	26	48	.351	21½

EAST

	W	L	Pct.	GB
New York	46	29	.613	—
Baltimore	42	30	.583	2½
Milwaukee	44	32	.579	2½
Detroit	39	36	.520	7
Boston	38	36	.514	7½
Cleveland	31	37	.456	11½
Toronto	23	54	.299	24

Thursday's games

Oakland 5, Kansas City 3
New York 4, Boston 0
California 4, Texas 2
Minnesota 4, Chicago 1
Baltimore 8, Milwaukee 1

Today's games

Oakland (Norris 11-4) at Texas (Mallack 4-8)

Baltimore (Flanagan 11-6) at Cleveland (Barker 6-7)

Chicago (Burns 7-5) at Seattle (Banister 7-8)

Kansas City (Gura 7-7) at California (Zahn 8-6)

Milwaukee (Cleveland 2-2) at New York (Reuschell 6-8)

Toronto (Todd 2-8) at Minnesota (Jackson 2-2)

Boston (Eckersley 7-6) at Detroit (Wilcox 7-7)

Saturday's games

Oakland at Texas
Baltimore at Cleveland
Chicago at Seattle
Kansas City at California
Milwaukee at New York
Toronto at Minnesota
Boston at Detroit

top ten

National League (Based on 145 at bats)

	AB	R	H	Pct.
Youngblid NY	202	24	67	.332
Guerrero LA	269	40	89	.331
Perkins SD	194	26	64	.330
Dawson Mtl	285	54	91	.319
Cedeno Htn	206	34	65	.316
Easler Pgh	219	35	69	.315
Griffey Cin	308	46	97	.315
Hendrick STL	283	46	88	.311
Garvey LA	311	46	96	.309
Buckner Chi	292	29	90	.308

Home Runs

Foster, Cincinnati 19; Kingman, New York, 18; Schmidt, Philadelphia, 18; JCruz, Houston, 14; Hendrick, St. Louis, 14; Horner, Atlanta, 14.

Runs Batted In

Foster, Cincinnati, 61; Garvey, Los Angeles, 59; Concepcion, Cincinnati, 53; JCruz, Houston, 51; Schmidt, Philadelphia, 50.

Pitching (Wins)

Valenzuela, Los Angeles, 13-4; Carlton, Philadelphia, 12-3; Rhoden, Pittsburgh, 11-3; Seaver, Cincinnati, 10-1; Hooton, Los Angeles, 10-4; Rogers, Montreal, 10-5.

American League (Based on 145 at bats)

	AB	R	H	Pct.
Diaz Cle	165	23	57	.345
Carew Cal	318	54	109	.343
Remy Bos	183	31	62	.339
Paciorek Sea	247	26	83	.336
Brett KC	230	32	77	.333
Mumphrey NY	297	44	96	.323
Singleton Bal	257	36	85	.331
Evans Bos	293	58	96	.328
Winfield NY	297	44	96	.323
Henderson Oak	300	60	96	.320

Home Runs

Armas, Oakland, 21; Thomas, Milwaukee, 20; Evans, Boston, 19; Luzinski, Chicago, 18; Gray, Seattle, 18.

Runs Batted In

Winfield, New York, 58; Armas, Oakland, 57; Evans, Boston, 52; BBell, Texas, 52; Rice, Boston, 50.

Pitching (Wins)

Norris, Oakland, 11-4; Forsch, California, 11-6; Flanagan, Baltimore, 11-6; McCatty, Oakland, 10-4; Darwin, Texas, 10-5; Haas, Milwaukee, 10-5; Morris, Detroit, 10-6.