

Voiding Contracts in MLB Over PEDs Not Happening Anytime Soon

Written by Maury Brown
Friday, 26 July 2013 12:59



Fans, as many do, aren't involved in reading through collective bargaining agreements, parsing drug policies, and noting labor history in sports.

They're blessed and cursed for this at the same time.

We want our sports figures--handsomely paid sports figures--to be accountable. We want the cheats banned from the game and commissioners to lay down hard justice.

It's not quite like that.

Take [Ryan Braun](#) or [Alex Rodriguez](#), should he be suspended. "Lifetime ban" and "void their contracts" pepper Twitter, Facebook, your local bar, and all points in-between.

It's not happening.

The drug policy in baseball has been a negotiated matter that has gone from paper thin to the best in all sports. It's not perfect. It's not what all want. It evolves and comes from compromise.

Ryan Braun and Alex Rodriguez have never been suspended for PEDs prior, so when Braun--using a bad football analogy--took a knee, the structure was loosely based on what would have happened if he had tested positive rather than compelling evidence under "just

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cause." As one said, "His suspension is treated as his first with 50 games, plus 15 more for the other (bullshit) he did," a reference to lying.

A-Rod is likely to get more but I can't see 100 games. The 3 strike rule is 50/100/banned from game. Maybe it will be over 100 but that's in "strike 2" territory, and it doesn't mix well within the drug agreement framework, even if this whole thing is open to interpretation. Maybe 99 games? Who knows? Apparently only the league.

None of the drug policy speaks to voiding contracts, and if the owners tried that route they'd fall on their sword. Too much. Too pushy. Too outside the framework. The matter would rage in the courtroom and heaven knows baseball wants to drag this out for as long as they can. They're not that stupid.

In that I mean, Michael Weiner, [Tony Clark](#), and the rest of the MLBPA have changed their position on drug testing almost 180 degrees since Donald Fehr and Gene Orza were at the helm. The majority of the players want to see an even playing field and are opposed to PEDs in the game. But while the PA supports a strong drug program, they're not going to get railroaded into things like voiding contracts over the matter. There's a policy. There's parameters within it. Make penalties work within that, or wait till the next round of collective bargaining. Opening up the JDA again (they've done it twice) in the midst of a labor agreement could happen, but you get the sense that if you go to the well too often, you begin to create acrimony. Labor peace is more important than pushing the matter now. The league has plenty of ammo to strengthen the policy next time.

The Biogenesis fallout had Part 1 with Braun's 65 game suspension. Crap could hit the round spiny thing at any second for Rodriguez. Only then will we really know how far the envelope will be pushed.



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