

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
LIFELINE/TRIBAL LINK UP ADVERTISING/OUTREACH
ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2021**

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Company contact:

Study Area Code:

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Advertise in media of general distribution.* (See attached advertisement(s).)



Letter to existing and new customers regarding the availability of Lifeline/Tribal Link Up within 1st 30 days of service.* (See invoice)

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Company's information posted on USAC website.

Other (describe):

*Required

MLB players: Teams 'depriving America of baseball games'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Players accused teams of "depriving America of baseball games" as part of a money fight set off by the coronavirus pandemic and raised the possibility baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred might push ahead with a shortened season over the union's objection.

Bruce Meyer, the union's chief negotiator, sent a letter to Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem on Friday threatening that an attempt to play without an agreement could lead players to block any attempt to expand the playoffs and deny consent to neutral-site games in the postseason.

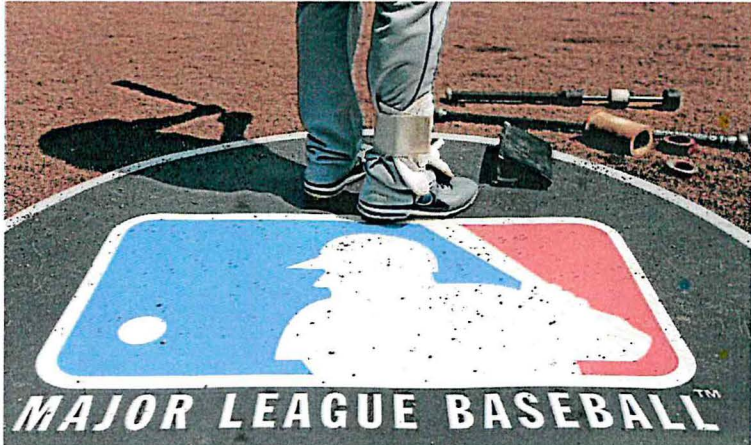
"The league's cynical tactic of depriving America of baseball games in furtherance of their demand for unwarranted salary concessions is shortsighted and troubling," Meyer wrote. "Meanwhile, other leagues are moving forward with their plans for resumption."

Meyer's letter was first reported by The Athletic, and a copy was obtained by The Associated Press.

Major League Baseball made its initial economic proposal on May 26, offering an 82-game regular season schedule and a sliding scale of cuts beyond the pro-rated shares of salaries the sides agreed to on March 26.

Players responded on Sunday with a 114-game regular season schedule running through October and no additional cuts. Each player would get about 70% of his original salary under the union's plan and roughly 22-47% under MLB's proposal, including \$200 million tied to the postseason being completed.

"We are disappointed that you are purportedly shutting down negotiations after making one proposal demanding over \$800 million in further pay cuts," Meyer wrote. "We reject your invitation at the end of the letter to negotiate against ourselves. We are similarly



In this April 24, 2013, file photo, Cleveland Indians second baseman Jason Kipnis stands on the Major League Baseball logo that serves as the on deck circle during the first inning of a baseball game between the Chicago White Sox and the Indians, in Chicago.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

chagrined by your decision to carry through on Rob's threat from last Sunday to intentionally play as few games as possible unless players agree to your demand for pay cuts."

MLB has proposed expanding the playoffs from 10 teams to 14, which would create at least six new games with broadcast rights to sell. The union offered to agree to a playoff expansion through 2021.

Both sides have said they hope to start the season around the beginning of July, and talks may intensify next week.

Before the pandemic, players were set to earn about \$4 billion in salaries, not including signing bonuses, termination pay and option buyouts. Under the March 26 agreement, that would be cut to around \$2 billion in an 82-game season.

MLB's offer would lower salaries to \$1.2 billion plus the \$200 million for the postseason. The union's proposal would leave salaries at \$2.8 billion.

"The league needs to tell us immediately when it plans to start the season if it plans to do so unilaterally," Meyer wrote. "We assume the league understands that in the event of a unilateral implementation of a season by MLB there are numerous aspects of a season that the players association will not be under any obligation to agree to, most notably any changes to the existing playoff structure and the locations of playoff games. If you intend to seek the players' agreement to any such changes, we suggest that you raise them expeditiously."

Under the March agreement, the season cannot start without MLB's consent

until there are no government restrictions on playing in front of fans in home ballparks, no relevant travel restrictions in the U.S. and Canada, and a determination by Manfred there is no health risk to players, staff or spectators. The sides committed to "discuss in good faith the economic feasibility of playing games in the absence of spectators or at appropriate substitute neutral sites."

Halem had written to the union on Wednesday that "we do not have any reason to believe that a negotiated solution for an 82-game season is possible."

"The commissioner is committed to playing baseball in 2020," he added. "He has started discussions with ownership about staging a shorter season without fans. Assuming that those discus-

sions go well, we will notify you at the appropriate time of our intentions."

Meyer criticized MLB for the pace of negotiations and for not responding to all of the union's document requests, which include agreements between clubs and regional sports networks. Some of the RSNs have elements of ownership overlapping teams and individuals who own teams.

MLB claims that by playing in empty ballparks, it would lose \$640,000 for each additional game. The union has challenged MLB's analysis.

"We note that the league frequently claims that it has negative operating profits from playing baseball yet it still puts on baseball games every year," Meyer said. "The league has done nothing to persuade us of the veracity

of its claims. As an example, the RSN contracts finally produced by the league on June 1 were so heavily redacted as to be essentially meaningless."

The union offered to defer up to \$100 million in salaries if the postseason isn't completed this year, but Halem said teams have assumed \$2 billion in additional debt.

"Rob said at our last meeting that the league 'can pay 100% of salaries right now' and that MLB doesn't have liquidity issues," Meyer wrote. "Rob's statement that the league can easily borrow the equivalent of the proposed deferral is also noteworthy in light of the league's claims about clubs being buried in debt."

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