



From the archives: the article below was originally published on Mar. 13, 1992

# Sandberg: baseball's \$7.1 million man

by Jon Hershenhorn

As they say, here we go again! this time it is Ryne Sandberg robbing the Cubs and most importantly, the Chicago Cubs fans. Sandberg is just one more baseball superstar cashing in.

Two years ago Kirby Puckett of the Minnesota Twins signed the first \$3 million-a-year contract in baseball history. Puckett was joined by other stars such as Will Clark and Rickey Henderson. This set a horrible trend for the years to come.

**JOSE CANSECO AND Darryl Strawberry** took their turns to deepen their pockets and make the public pay more to see them play baseball. With both players came the first \$5 million-a-year contracts and the sickening trend continued.

This year Bobby Bonilla stepped up to the plate and signed the first \$6 million-a-year contract with the New York Mets. But hold onto your money for as long as you can, because Sandberg just signed for a whopping \$7.1 million-a-year with the Cubs.

Every major league team is shelling out big money for major league players. Mike Morgan, an average starting pitcher, with a

record slightly above .500 last year is making \$3 million a year.

As anybody can see, baseball's payroll has gone berserk, and any player can take a team and its fans to the cleaners.

**NOT ONLY DOES** the baseball team have to pay for the player, but as a result, the fans of the ball club do too. To make up for lost revenue, an organization will raise the ticket prices in an effort to make up for the player's gigantic salaries.

Take the Cubs, for example. Last year the Cubs paid Danny Jackson, Dave Smith, and George Bell \$3 million dollars a year each to play with the Cubs.

This year the fans get hit with an increase in the prices of tickets. All seats went up a dollar from last year for weekend, holiday, night, opening day, and exhibition games.

Now that the Cubs have signed Morgan for \$3 million, Greg Matthews for \$4 million, and Sandberg for \$7.1 million, the fans are likely to get hit with another increase in ticket and food prices. Soon fans will not be able to afford to come to games regularly.

**A FAMILY OF four** wishing to go to a game will pay \$48 for four upper-deck box tickets, about \$35 for lunch or dinner, \$10 for parking or riding on the El — and what the kids want a souvenir? The grand total without souvenirs comes out to be in between \$90 and \$95 for the family.

What will happen in years to come when a player like Barry Bonds is a free agent and will make \$8 or \$9 million a year? Will this prevent families from attending baseball games? The madness must stop!

It is time for baseball to examine the National Basketball Association's salary cap. The salary cap sets a limit that each basketball team can spend on their 12-man team.

**THE SALARY CAP** has stopped the insane skyrocketing of money being paid to players. There are a few exceptions such as Larry Bird and Clyde Drexler, but their respective teams have to pay the other 11 players with whatever money the teams have left over in their budgets.

Salary caps ensure that fans would have an equitable chance to attend baseball games.

# Understanding the impact of the Sandberg deal

by Matt Murray

Although Ryne Sandberg's four year, \$28.4 million contract extension signed on Mar. 2, 1992 seems small in comparison to modern-day player salaries, it was just the latest in a line of record-breaking contracts in the MLB, and it would not be the last.

After the Cubs' eight-time all-star secured his extension, former New Trier sports editor Jon Hershenhorn predicted that reigning NL MVP Barry Bonds would soon surpass Sandberg's annual salary of \$7.1 million.

While Bonds would become the highest-paid player in baseball in the following offseason, his six-year, \$43 million contract with the San Francisco Giants fell short of Hershenhorn's annual value prediction of \$8 to \$9 million dollars.

The trend of escalating player salaries that Hershenhorn foresaw continued throughout the 1990's.

Contracts handed out to superstars such as Ken Griffey Jr, Greg Maddux, Pedro Martinez, Roger Clemens, and Carlos Delgado eventually culminated in Alex Rodriguez's ten-year, \$252 million contract with the Texas Rangers in 2000, which dramatically altered the pay scale for Major League players.

However, while the increase in Major League salaries has led to the uptick in ticket prices that Hershenhorn predicted, the greatest impact of the MLB's gargantuan contracts lies in the competitive balance of the league itself.

As mentioned in Hershenhorn's

original article, the MLB did not have a salary cap at the time of Sandberg's contract and still does not have one today.

Teams can choose how much money they devote to player salaries, and the massive revenue streams of big market franchises gives them the financial ability to outbid small market teams for superstar players.

Prominent MLB franchises like the Chicago Cubs, New York Yankees, Washington Nationals, and Boston Red Sox all spent over \$200 million on player salaries in 2019, large chunks of which went towards paying star players such as Jon Lester, Giancarlo Stanton, and David Price.

On the other hand, less-recognizable franchises such as Pittsburgh Pirates, San Diego Padres, Toronto Blue Jays, and Tampa Bay Rays had payrolls under \$80 million in 2019, which was largely due to the financial constraints that they face as small market teams.

The woes of modern-day small market franchises can even be traced back to the season when Sandberg signed his lucrative contract extension.

The Pittsburgh Pirates, after suffering a third straight loss in the NLCS in 1992, recognized that they would not be able to re-sign Barry Bonds and pitcher Doug Drabek due to Sandberg raising the ceiling of player salaries, so they let both of them walk in free agency and began a postseason drought of 20 seasons the following year.

# Remembering the Cowboys and Indians

Reflecting on New Trier sports during the split-campus era of 1967 to 1981

by Matt Murray

New Trier East's 14-0 triumph over the New Trier West Cowboys on Oct. 29, 1976 was the sixth of ten that the Indians would experience during that season, making the playoffs for the first time in their six seasons under Head Coach Eugene Cichowski.

Although the Indians opened the Cichowski era with ten straight winning seasons, the ten games they won that season were the most that they would ever win in their fifteen seasons as New Trier East.

The team would make it back to the playoffs in 1978 and 1980 with a pair of 8-2 seasons, but they fell short of the state title game both times.

While the Indians were a perennial success during the split-campus era, the Cowboys were maddeningly inconsistent.

New Trier West bookended a 1-7 record in 1971 with two undefeated seasons and dramatically regressed as the decade wore on, clinching their fourth straight losing season in 1976 a week before their loss to the Indians.

Although they would rebound with a 6-3 season in 1977, the Cowboys regressed to three wins in 1978 before bottoming out at 0-9 during Bob Naughton's final season in 1979.

The era of split campuses also

divided the boys basketball teams between east and west, but unlike their football counterparts, both New Trier East and New Trier West would find consistent success.

John Schnieter's Indians were frequent participants in the state playoffs from the moment he arrived in 1963 with their best season being a state runner-up bid in 1973; and after some middling years to start his tenure as New Trier West's coach, Mel Sheets turned the Cowboys into a powerhouse as well, coaching them to four straight playoff berths starting in 1976.

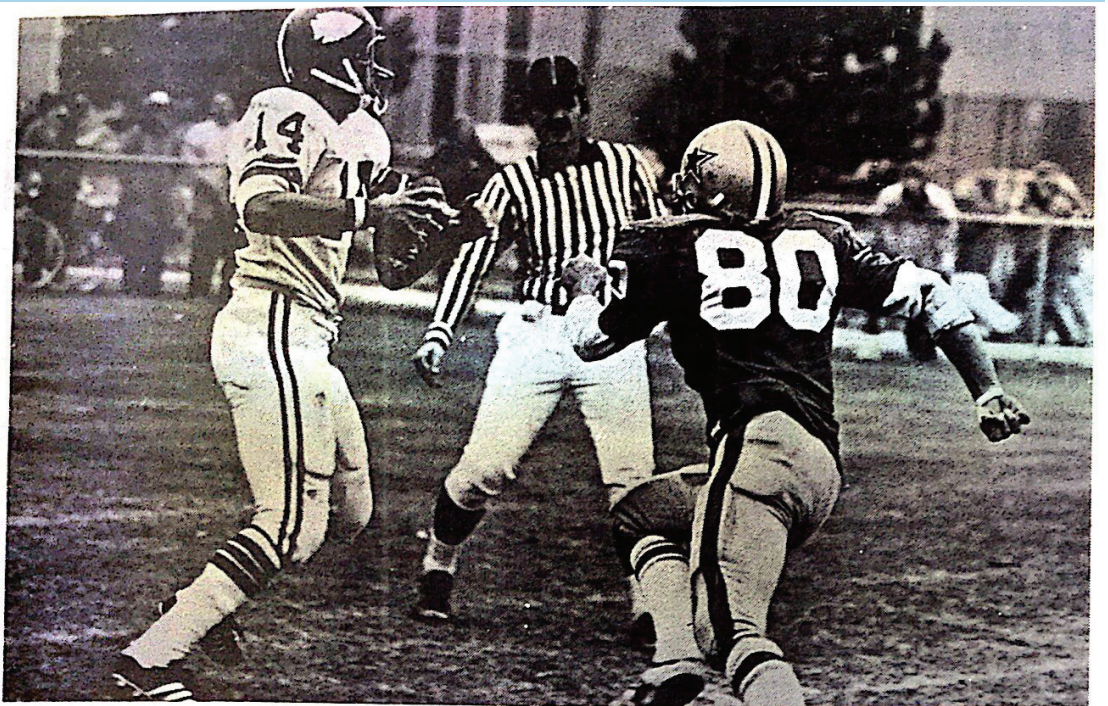
However, once the campuses reunited in 1981, the players who had been kept apart for nearly a decade and a half found immediate success on their newly combined teams.

After replacing Schnieter, who became the girls basketball coach upon the school's reunification, Sheets took the boys basketball team to the sectional round of the 1983 IHSA playoffs, leading them to a 23-5 record in his second of fifteen seasons coaching at Winnetka.

Meanwhile, Cichowski put his larger pool of football talent to good use in his first few seasons after the school's reunification, leading the newly-combined roster to a 10-1 season in 1981 and a state championship game appearance in 1982.

The latter of those two seasons remains the furthest that New Trier Football has ever advanced in the IHSA playoffs, and the 11 games that they won that season were the most in the Cichowski era.

From the archives: the article below was originally published on Nov. 6, 1976



Indian quarterback Rich Weiss runs short of time as a NT-W defenseman sets his sights. Indians were victorious in the game with a score of 14 to 0. The

Indians will take on Highland Park tomorrow at home/ photo by Simon.

# Close call for Indians

The Indians football team took on rivals New Trier West last week and found that the Cowboys had been doing their homework for the game, but not enough to win.

NT-E went into last Saturday's game with a five and one record. At that time NT-W had a one and five record. According to that, the outcome of a game with these two teams would be fairly obvious. This was not the case with the NT-E, NT-W game. The final score of the game was 14 to 0, a victory for the Indians. The only problem was that the Indians weren't able to score until half way through the fourth quarter. Both touchdowns were scored by Steve Bianucci.

New Trier West had totally revamped their defense, which frustrated the Indians. Even though the NT-E possession of the ball dominated the game, they weren't able to anything with it. The NT-E defense made sure that the Cowboy's couldn't do anything with the ball either. The fact that it was cold, windy and raining made a big difference for NT-E also. With the conditions and West's frustrating defense it didn't look like the Indians that had been seen playing excellent games the past weeks. Fans had seen Rich Weiss make every pass he'd tried and have time to do it, but it just didn't seem to work against NT-W.

It seemed the Indians might

have a chance in the second half. Every few plays there would be one that got past the Cowboys, which had been uncoman in the first half. With 5:21 remaining in the fourth quarter a long drive finally scored. Then the Indians came right back and did it again with 2:26 left in the final quarter. NT-W hadn't been able to do anything before then and the Indians weren't going to give them a chance to do anything after that.

Now with a record of six and one, the Indians will take on Highland Park at home tomorrow. Last Saturday Highland Park lost to Deerfield 22 to 21, compared to the Indians who soundly defeated Deerfield.