

**Selig: A's bid to pursue ballpark in San Jose is 'on the front burner' for MLB**

By Mark Purdy, San Jose Mercury News

SCOTTSDALE, AZ -- Bud Selig, minutes after agreeing to stay on as Major League Baseball commissioner through 2014, left no doubt what was at the top of his task list. It is the resolution of the A's ballpark situation and whether they will be permitted to pursue a ballpark in San Jose over the objections of the Giants, who claim Santa Clara County as their territory.

"It's really on the front burner," Selig said here at the owners' meetings, where he accepted an extension of his contract by two years.

Selig confirmed that the special committee he appointed to examine the A's ballpark dilemma had presented a report to the MLB executive committee and that the report was "comprehensive." But the matter never made it to the agenda of the larger meeting where all 30 owners participate. A resolution could be brought to the ownership groups, soon, however.

"I would say we're proceeding at a rather quick pace," Selig said.

So if the final dispensation of the matter were a baserunner, would he say the deal is at third base?

"Might as well use a baseball analogy," Selig agreed, shrugging.

More significantly in terms of the mechanics needed to make a San Jose ballpark happen -- which would include a special ballot referendum that MLB has promised to partially finance -- Selig indicated that he would not allow such an election to proceed unless the Giants agree to stay out of that process in terms of supporting an anti-ballpark campaign. An organization called "Stand Up For San Jose," which the Giants admit supporting, has filed a lawsuit challenging the environmental impact report for the proposed downtown San Jose ballpark site.

"Ultimately," Selig said, "when we get to the resolution, we need to get everybody to sit and talk and get all of that settled."

The Giants' territorial rights claim to San Jose could be overturned by a 75% vote of MLB owners. The vote could be conducted in a conference call at any time.

But even if the 75% approval happens, the Giants could fight back by filing further lawsuits or backing an anti-ballpark campaign in the election. This would set up the awkward situation of one MLB franchise spending money to defeat a project supported by another MLB franchise in an election partially paid for by MLB itself. Selig could use his commissioner's powers to persuade the Giants from doing so, though he is more likely to try to reach a consensus with all parties.

Lew Wolff, the A's owner, reacted to Selig's remarks with optimism.

"I'm delighted to hear all that," Wolff said, "and pleased that we're moving toward a decision."

**A's think Selig extension is good news**

San Francisco Chronicle, Staff and News Services

On the day owners voted 29-1 to give Commissioner Bud Selig a two-year contract extension through 2014, Selig said Major League Baseball is working "at a rather quick pace" to resolve the A's quest to move from Oakland to San Jose.

Selig said there was a comprehensive presentation to the executive council during the owners meetings in Scottsdale, Ariz. The issue is "very much on the front burner," Selig said.

A's managing general partner Lew Wolff, who attended the two-day meetings, said he was happy to hear of Selig's remarks.

Wolff suggested Selig's new deal is good news for the A's stadium pursuit.

"I was very pleased with the extension of the commissioner's contract," Wolff said. "While I still await a decision on our request, the importance of Bud continuing to lead MLB is vital to the best interests. I will continue to follow the process relating to our need for a new fan-friendly venue as directed."

For now, the Giants stand in the way of a move to San Jose, based on their territorial rights to the area. In March 2009, Selig appointed a committee to evaluate the issue.

As for the extension, Selig said, "I've often said, and I believe this, there's no higher honor than being the commissioner of baseball."

- *Susan Slusser*

**Padres' sale stalled:** Every team's owners voted to approve Selig's extension except the Padres' John Moores, who was upset that his team's sale was not approved.

Owners had deferred a vote on the team's proposed transfer to Jeff Moorad, saying they need clarification on some financial information.

Selig said he wants the Padres' sale issues resolved "expeditiously." Moorad said he respects the process and is working to resolve the concerns.

Moorad was a prominent sports agent before becoming a minority owner first with the Diamondbacks, then with the Padres. His group owns 49 percent of the Padres.

**Wild-card update:** Selig is "very hopeful" that another wild-card team from each league will be added this season.

Selig says that a committee formed to work out details of expanding the playoffs from eight teams to 10 is dealing with scheduling issues.

Addition of a second wild card in each league would add a one-game play-in between teams with the two best records in each league that are not division winners. Selig says that would mean condensing the overall playoff schedule.

Selig says the committee knows he is an ardent supporter of the concept. Under the new collective bargaining agreement, MLB and the players' union must agree by March 1 whether to add the new round for 2012.

**Scott a Ray:** Free agent Luke Scott, 33, agreed to a one-year, \$6 million contract with the Rays. He probably will be Tampa Bay's primary designated hitter.

Scott is a .264 career hitter who spent the past four seasons with the Orioles. Last year, he hit .220 with nine home runs and 22 RBIs in 64 games and had season-ending shoulder surgery in July.

**Vogelsong's deal:** Here's how his new \$8.3 million contract breaks down for Ryan Vogelsong, who signed the two-year contract with the Giants Wednesday: \$3 million this year, \$5 million in 2013 and a \$300,000 buyout if a \$6.5 million club option for 2014 isn't exercised. He can make \$300,000 in performance bonuses each of his first two years.

**Briefly:** Rangers President Nolan Ryan said he is confident the team will complete a contract with Japanese pitcher Yu Darvish by next week's deadline. The Rangers, who bid a record \$51.7 million last month under the posting system for the rights to Darvish, have until Wednesday afternoon to sign him. ... Outfielder Carlos Gomez (\$1.9 million) and left-hander Manny Parra (\$1.2 million) agreed to one-year deals with the Brewers, avoiding salary arbitration. ... Rick Down rejoined the Yankees' organization as a roving minor-league hitting instructor.

## **It's past time for league to let A's move to San Jose**

By Jeff Passan, Yahoo! Sports

**2011 record:** 74-88

**Finish:** Third place, AL West

**2011 final payroll:** \$70.5 million

**Estimated 2012 opening day payroll:** \$39 million

**Yahoo! Sports' offseason rank:** 29th

### **Offseason action**

Over a three-week span, the [Oakland Athletics](#) traded 37 percent of their strikeouts, 37.8 percent of their wins and 64.9 percent of their saves from 2011. The frenzied fire sale that saw [Trevor Cahill](#), [Gio Gonzalez](#), [Andrew Bailey](#) and [Craig Breslow](#) leave was expected, sure, but the speed with which the A's eased them out of town felt sordid, the ugly consequence of baseball's refusal to settle Oakland's festering stadium situation.

Want to let us rot? Fine, the A's are saying. We'll make sure you bathe in the full funk of our putridity.

There are no winners here – not Major League Baseball, which has refused to dictate where Oakland's future lies; not the A's, who made \$20 million-plus annually between 2009-11, according to Forbes, which throws a dubious shadow on Billy Beane's claim the team lost money last season; and especially not A's fans, a rabid but winnowing bunch that must dream about 2014 or 2015 instead of now.

Most of Oakland's maneuvers looked more toward that future in a different ballpark – of [Jarrod Parker](#) (from Arizona in the Cahill deal), A.J. Cole and [Brad Peacock](#) (in Washington's package for Gonzalez) and Raul Alcantara (the headliner from Boston for Bailey) anchoring a rotation going forward. Of [Derek Norris](#) (Washington) catching them, [Collin Cowgill](#) (Arizona) and [Josh Reddick](#) (Boston) running down fly balls in the outfield. Of something beyond 2012, which could be brutal.

Gone are all those pitchers, plus [Josh Willingham](#) and [David DeJesus](#), leaving [Coco Crisp](#) and his new two-year, \$14 million deal as the lone holdover from Oakland's free-agent outfield as well as the lone tie to a long-ago time known as the '70s. Of the 19 position players on the A's 40-man roster, Crisp is the only one born in the '70s – and just barely, at Nov. 1, 1979. The next-oldest player? Utilityman [Adam Rosales](#). He turned 28 in May.

### **Reality check**

Going into last season, the A's found themselves the hipster style of baseball: sort of ugly but trendy nonetheless. It was easy to see how scouts could fall in love with their pitching rotation. At the same time, the offense that waylaid them for the last half-decade was as schizophrenic as the name for O.co Coliseum (if indeed that's what it's called anymore).

Then nightmare after nightmare terrorized the A's. [Dallas Braden](#) tore a shoulder ligament in May when the A's led the major leagues with a 2.69 ERA among their starters. Considering [Johan Santana](#) still hasn't pitched in the major leagues since suffering the same injury toward the end of 2010, the likelihood of Braden's return for opening day is minimal. [Brett Anderson](#), the hard-throwing, slider-heavy left-hander, had Tommy John surgery in July and may return before the All-Star break. And with Gonzalez and Cahill gone, all that's left from last year's rotation is [Brandon McCarthy](#).

Amazingly, the cupboard remains decently stocked among starters. McCarthy and [Guillermo Moscoso](#) were command-and-control revelations (whose low strikeout totals don't necessarily bode well for repeat performances). Parker has No. 2-level stuff and Peacock emerged as a likely big-league rotation staple last season. Even [Tom Milone](#), a low-upside lefty who was the final piece of the Gonzalez deal, could find himself plugging a hole until Anderson and Braden return.

The bats, on the other hand, remain flaccid. While a full season of [Jemile Weeks](#) should help and [Scott Sizemore](#) looked a lot better in an A's uniform than he did Detroit's, Oakland is banking on a whole bunch of maybes. [Brandon Allen](#)? Maybe he can hit for power in the major leagues like he has at Triple-A. Same for [Chris Carter](#) and [Kila Ka'aihue](#). Maybe [Michael Taylor](#)

can regain the prospect luster of a few years ago, maybe Cowgill can survive in the big leagues as a 5-foot-9 corner outfielder, maybe first-round pick Sonny Gray turns into [Tim Hudson 2.0](#).

The A's might as well be the Ifs. Because as long as owner Lew Wolff and GM Billy Beane run their team with an indignant streak – trying ever so subtly to force MLB to figure out their situation – the perpetual limbo of the franchise will render it irrelevant. No team, not even the best-managed ones, can win with constant change. And that's what the A's are right now: a group of mercenaries who understand they're not long for a green-and-yellow uniform.

Cahill and Gonzalez and Bailey and Breslow learned just like Tejada and Giambi and Zito and Hudson and Mulder and Haren and Damon and Street before them. Only a new stadium will stop the revolving door. And the almost-certain use of public money to get it makes the situation not only more tenuous but more revolting.

## Savior

March will mark the three-year anniversary of MLB forming a committee to explore the A's relocation prospects. Three years to figure out something that long ago was evident: baseball has no future in Oakland, not with MLB's commitment to publicly funded stadiums and the city's unwillingness to bend. It's long past due for **Bud Selig** to negotiate a compensation package for the [San Francisco Giants](#) to give up the territorial rights to San Jose, where the A's can move and prosper. Baseball is better with thriving multi-team markets. Los Angeles has suffered because of the Dodgers, New York because of the Mets and the Bay Area because of the A's. The Dodgers will have new owners soon. Creditors ultimately will save the Mets. The A's are in Selig's hands. He needs to stop fumbling them.

## Athletics in Haiku

Liquidation sale!

Bats, balls, jerseys, pants, socks, jocks

Next on A's trade list

## Scout.com's 2012 Top-100 MLB Prospects

Frankie Piliere, ScoutingBaseball.com

Jan 5, 2012

The 2011 season was a banner year for young talent in the big leagues, and all early indications point to a similar crop of future stars making their way to the show in 2012. Scout.com's annual top prospects' list includes many of those names, as well as all the other names you need to know to stay up-to-date on the latest in minor league baseball.

Sometimes in baseball we are lucky enough to get a sneak preview of the next wave of talent late in a season. The 2011 season gave us that preview of our 2012 number one prospect, **Matt Moore**. And it is Moore himself that gives us a fantastic example of why the world of prospects can be so fascinating. Moore was an 8th round draft pick and spent parts of five years in the minors before making a splash with the Rays during the stretch run. This is an example of player development at its finest.

Matt Moore is the toast of the prospect world right now, and he reminds us why we are so interested in #94 prospect [Cheslor Cuthbert](#) or #42 [Xander Bogaerts](#). And this year's list is full of especially young and inexperienced players. 2011 was a year of prospects graduating to the big leagues and 2012 will be all about watching some of professional baseball's youngest players begin to flourish before our eyes.

Some of the players listed, such as the Yankees' [Jesus Montero](#), will likely be immediate big league factors in 2012, while many others will spend the year finding their way in the lower levels of the minors. With another big wave of prospects ready to break into the majors, some players lingering near the bottom of this list could easily find themselves in Matt Moore's 2012 position in a very short time.

Oakland A's ranked in Top 100 list by scout.com:

Pos	Pos Rank	Rating	Name	Bat	Thw	Ht/Wt	Current Team	MLB	Home
<a href="#">1B</a>	4	★★★★★	<a href="#">Chris Carter</a>	R	R	6-5/230	<a href="#">Sacramento (AAA)</a>	<a href="#">OAK</a>	Las Vegas, <a href="#">NV</a>
<a href="#">OF</a>	5	★★★★★	<a href="#">Michael Choice</a>	R	R	6-1/215	<a href="#">Stockton (A)</a>	<a href="#">OAK</a>	Arlington, <a href="#">TX</a>
<a href="#">P</a>	36	★★★★★	<a href="#">A.J. Cole</a>	R	R	6-4/180	<a href="#">Burlington (IA) (A)</a>	<a href="#">OAK</a>	Winter Springs, <a href="#">FL</a>
<a href="#">P</a>	18	★★★★★	<a href="#">Sonny Gray</a>	R	R	5-11/180	<a href="#">Midland (AA)</a>	<a href="#">OAK</a>	
<a href="#">OF</a>	12	★★★★★	<a href="#">Grant Green</a>	R	R	6-3/180	<a href="#">Sacramento (AAA)</a>	<a href="#">OAK</a>	Anaheim Hills, <a href="#">CA</a>
<a href="#">P</a>	13	★★★★★	<a href="#">Jarrod Parker</a>	R	R	6-1/195	<a href="#">Sacramento (AAA)</a>	<a href="#">OAK</a>	Ossian, <a href="#">IN</a>
<a href="#">P</a>	44	★★★★★	<a href="#">Brad Peacock</a>	R	R	6-1/175	<a href="#">Sacramento (AAA)</a>	<a href="#">OAK</a>	Miami, <a href="#">FL</a>

