

Will Leipsic Viking Baseballers Hold Out in 1977?

Leipsic Free Press – February 10, 1977 – Steve Raney

Although high school sports are strictly amateur, it might be fun to imagine what would happen if interscholastic sports had the same problems as major league baseball.

Ted Miller has a depressing problem. Miller, the head coach of the 1976 Viking state championship baseball team is having trouble getting his players signed up for the upcoming season. It seems as if the players feel they are worth more than Miller and team owner, Lee Schmitt, wants to give them.

Ruben Gonzales, figured to be the Vikes' top pitcher this season, refuses to sign unless Miller and Schmitt meet his demands, including better showers in the locker rooms. Meanwhile, left fielder Ron Christman won't approve his contract until female trainers are allowed in the locker room. Miller is threatening to trade these players to Columbus Grove but Putnam County League Commissioner, Marvin Walls, cancelled the deal, saying "it would ruin PCL baseball".

Second baseman Dave Maag, a junior this year, wants a two year contract so he is guaranteed a starting position in his senior year, regardless of how he plays this season. Roger Meyer, the top Viking slugger and center fielder, won't sign unless Miller gives him ten dollars for every home run.

Third-sacker Tracy Place wants the team to buy all of his equipment, meaning new spikes, uniforms and gloves for everyone. Schmidt refused this proposition. Place also feels he should be paid more if he makes all season without committing any errors.

Duane Tooman has many demands, number one being that the team fly to every game instead of riding a school bus. Tooman thinks that the state champs should go first class, but Schmitt rejected the idea because the whole team can't fit into one of Bob Ruhe's airplanes and the landing facilities at each school in Putnam County are rather limited. Tooman also wants each of the Leipsic town merchants to donate \$100 for every ball he hits over the fence and thinks that the players should get unlimited expense accounts at the State tournament, meaning the L&K restaurant.

Whether Schmitt and Miller can satisfy the player's needs may determine how well the squad fares this season. Miller needs another pitcher and may use some of the athletic fund monies to buy Mark Niese from Miller City, who is playing out his option this year.

Of course, this is all in fun, and Leipsic fans are hoping the team can repeat last year's success. Hmm, I wonder if the players are going to hold out past spring training?