

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

**Moderator: Jon Shestakofsky
December 4, 2016
6:00 pm CT**

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. Welcome to the National Baseball Hall of Fame Call. The call is being recorded, Sunday, December 4, 2016. I'd now like to turn the call over to Jon Shestakofsky. Please proceed.

Jon Shestakofsky: Hello, everyone and welcome to the National Baseball Hall of Fame's Conference Call with Commissioner Emeritus Allan H Bud Selig. My name is Jon Shestakofsky and I'm Vice President of Communications and End at the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Just moments ago, it was announced on MLB Network that Commissioner Selig and John Schuerholz have been elected to the Hall of Fame via the Today's Game Era Ballot. Congratulations to you, Commissioner.

Bud Selig: Thank you.

Jon Shestakofsky: These men will (unintelligible) be inducted into the Hall of Fame on Sunday, July 30, along with any other electees that may join them from the BBWAA ballot, which will be announced on MLB Network at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 18. Before we open up for questions, I'll turn it over to the Commissioner to make an opening statement.

Bud Selig: Well, thank you very much and to say this is a great day in my life would be an understatement. I, as many of you know, and a lot of you know me well, the fact of the matter is that I've looked forward to this date for a long time and I'm really honored to say the least. I consider myself very fortunate have had a career in a sport that I love. I was able to do something that I loved and while the commissionership had tough moments from time to time, the fact that we really restructured the sport and did a lot of things has been a great source of satisfaction.

So when Jane called me today, it was really a high honor to say the least. So I'm delighted to be with all of you. Many of you of course have lived with me through all of this and so I know you know how I feel and I appreciate all the great feelings that I've heard in the last 20 minutes or so. So I'm ready for any kind of questions.

Jon Shestakofsky: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. James, we are now ready to open up for questions from the audience.

Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, if you'd like to register a question please press the one followed by the four on your telephone. You will hear a three tone prompt to acknowledge your request. Again, to register questions by telephone please press the one followed by the four. One moment please for our first question.

And our first question is from the line of Robert Grayson. Please proceed.

Robert Grayson: Yes, congratulations. Thank you very much. I was wondering what were your thoughts when you were first asked to become commissioner? Was there any

hesitation on your part? Were -- did you feel -- you prefer being an owner?
Did you like that? What was your reaction? What did you feel?

Bud Selig: That's an interesting question because there was a period, as you know, while I was interim, I was the Commissioner but I was interim, I was happy where I was. I had founded the Brewers and nurtured them and I knew that we needed a new stadium. And I had been very active in baseball so -- but even I didn't understand the dimension of the problems that we faced at that time and I guess as time went on, it was a challenge. It was also my understanding of much that needed to be done and I had to make sure, frankly, that I could be the Commissioner and not with all the love I had for the Brewers wouldn't get in the way.

Once I became convinced of that I knew that I could successfully do the job and it was great. It was really, really -- it was a challenge, but that was the reason for the hesitancy. There was some criticism at the beginning, well, how can you make an owner a commissioner but that dissipated and the truth of the matter is, I've said this to a lot of you, it was great training. Because when problems arose, there wasn't one problem that I hadn't encountered when I was with the Brewers or at least doing a lot of baseball work, which I did for 25 years before I became -- or 28 years before I actually became the commissioner.

Robert Grayson: Yes, that's what I was going to ask you. I felt -- I always felt during your reign that you reached back on a lot of the experiences that you must have had as an owner to deal with some of the problems that you came across as the commissioner.

Bud Selig: There's no question. There's no question that's true. It was really remarkably -- it was really great training for me and, you know, the problems were so

complex that sometimes I had to go back in history, and you all know what a history buff I am, go back in history to say what did they do, why did they do this. And so yes, my training was really important and really good. And it was a big help.

Robert Grayson: Thank you and congratulations again.

Bud Selig: Thank you very much.

Operator: Our next question is from the line of Tom Haudricourt from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Please proceed.

Tom Haudricourt: Hey, Bud.

Bud Selig: Hi, Tom.

Tom Haudricourt: Hey, Bud can you set the scene for us a little bit on when you were given the information today, like who was with you and then who you might have heard from afterward and who you might have made your first call to?

Bud Selig: Well, Tom, I was home. It reminded me of many a ninth inning where I used to pace around. You amongst others know that, have seen that, and I was nervous. And when Jane called, my family was here and people were calling. Actually, I was hearing from everybody. A lot of people in baseball and it's been kind of a wild scene here since then. But you know, Tom, it's hard for me to put into words what a remarkable experience this has been. And I couldn't help but think before, when I think of how this all started back in 1964, 1963, and to think that here I am going into the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown is only those of you, and there are a lot of them on this call who

know me well, can understand that. And certainly, my family and friends, no question about that.

But that was the scene and it was chaotic for a while, Tommy.

Tom Haudricourt: That's a good kind of chaos?

Yes, the best.

Tom Haudricourt: But what do you think your mom and dad would say about this, especially your mom who got you started with your love of baseball?

Bud Selig: Well, I've often thought of that and I wish they'd been around to see this. My mother would -- both of them would be overwhelmed but to think my mother took this 14, 15-year-old kid to New York to see baseball and to see Broadway shows and other things, because she was always a teacher. But it's been, you know, it's been an amazing career, Tommy, and they would be stunned. That's all I can say, really stunned.

Tom Haudricourt: One last thing. Anybody who knows you knows how much you love to get your exercise, your walks, and your bike riding. I know you've had a knee injury. What did this do to kind of sooth that today and get your mind off of that?

Bud Selig: Well, it's tough and I've had unfortunately a stress fracture in my tibia, plus a lot of knee problems. So the last week or so have been very difficult and you'll probably see it tomorrow, but I will say this to you, it feels damn better right now, I'll tell you that.

Tom Haudricourt: Thanks and congratulations.

Bud Selig: Thanks Tom, very much.

Operator: Our next question is from the line of Bob Nightingale from USA Today.
Please proceed.

Bob Nightingale: Hey, congratulations, Bub.

Bud Selig: Thank you, Bob.

Bob Nightingale: Of all the achievements you've accomplished as Commissioner, is there one that you're most proudest of, of everything?

Bud Selig: Well, I guess I'd have to say the economic reformation of the game because what I inherited in 1992, it was -- we were living in a system that was archaic, hadn't been changed since what I call the Ebbets Field Polo Grounds days. And I'm proudest of the - that because that was painful. It took a lot of time but it saved and, you know, there are a lot of small market clubs that would tell you today they wouldn't be in business. But it also, it's benefited the big market clubs and our revenue has grown from \$1.2 billion to this year I believe it will be in excess of \$11 billion. And I guess that's it, I love all the sociological things, Bob. I think you know how important that is to me.

You know, I know when we did the wild card how much criticism I took because baseball is a social institution, slow to change sometimes, but -- so there are a lot of things that I'm really proud of, but the economics, I have enabled this game to grow both in popularity, and revenue, and everything. And that's, Bob, what I'm really proudest of.

Bob Nightingale: Okay. (Unintelligible) we'll see you tomorrow.

Bud Selig: Thank you. Look forward to it, Bob. Thanks.

Operator: Our next question is from the line of Barry Bloom from Majorleagebaseball.com. Please proceed.

Barry Bloom: Hey, congratulations, Buddy.

Bud Selig: Thank you, Barry. Thank you very much.

Barry Bloom: We talked a little about this yesterday but, or the other day when I spoke to you. Could you put into perspective the social changes that you were able to make into the game from retiring Jackie's number and honoring him every year to the amount of investments the sport has made into the RBI Program, Boys and Girls Clubs.

Bud Selig: Thank you, Barry. I'm proud of that. I really am. The sociological changes, while they don't always get the same sort of pizzazz, I guess, I'll say, were really important. I believe that Jackie Robinson coming to the Big Leagues is baseball's proudest and most important moment. And so I'm happy that we could honor that. I'm happy that's grown to what it is. I'm happy that it's grown the RBI program. I'm happy a lot of (unintelligible) Henry Aaron awards and all the other things that have gone on.

The clubs I think got tired of me hearing it, but I want to say it again today. This is a social institution, a social institution with all kinds of social responsibilities and I think we've really, we've come a long way on that score. And so Barry, I'm really proud of those, really, really proud. I know what an impact they made on me and so I hope that they and I believe they have on the American public and certainly the baseball public.

Barry Bloom: You were such an active commissioner in all the years you were in office. How's the last couple of years been for you as you've been away from it?

Bud Selig: Well, they've been good actually. I'm teaching at the University of Wisconsin, the history department. I'm teaching at Marquette (unintelligible) in the Law School. Now, I'm teaching at Arizona State and I'm trying to write a book in between. But it's been really good. And as I go back over the last 25 years in my teaching, it's really, really been good and I've loved the interaction with the students. Really have loved the interaction with the students.

So the last couple years have been very rewarding, very, very rewarding.

Barry Bloom: Well, congratulations and I'll see you tomorrow.

Bud Selig: Thank you very much, Barry, thank you.

Operator: And ladies and gentlemen, as a reminder to register questions please press the one followed by the four. Our next question is from the line of David Waldstein from New York Times. Please proceed.

David Waldstein: Hi, Bud. Congratulations.

Bud Selig: Thank you, Dave. Thank you.

David Waldstein: You're welcome. During your tenure, there was a lot of turmoil. What was the thing that really caused you the most pain? Was it losing the 1994 World Series? Was it maybe all the steroid stuff that you guys had to go through?

Bud Selig: Well, you know, Dave, my friend, Bart Giamatti used to say that baseball is a metaphor for life and he was right. And so we talk about all the great moments and those were tough moments. 1994 was a very, very tough moment. We had had seven work stoppages before then and so I was really concerned, really concerned. But you know, being the history buff I am, Dave, I have since looked back on it and I've tried to talk to my students by saying sometimes in life, you have to go through certain things to maybe solve the problem. And now, with Rob Manfred and Tony Clarks marvelous work of a couple days ago, we're going to have 27 years of labor peace. Nobody ever thought that possible.

I remember when we made the 2002 deal, and the 2006 deal, and the 2011 deal, and Rob was certainly a great part of that along with Frank Coullahan and Dan Helm. And so I, you know, yes, it was terribly painful. Broke my heart. Can still remember that fateful night that we -- that I was up all night replaying every world series that I can remember going back to 1944. And it was painful, but it served I think as a great lesson and we took it. And the same thing in the steroid thing. Yes, it was painful. Yes, it had its ups and downs, but I want to say this to you. We solved that problem. It took a while for a lot of reasons that we don't have to get into tonight, but the fact of the matter is that we solved it. We now have the toughest testing program in American Sports and maybe in America, listening to (Wada) and (Yusada) and everybody else. Remarkable.

So we did what a social institution should do. We solved our problem. Steroids were not a baseball problem. Steroids are a societal problem and so from a sport that never had a drug-testing program, we came a long ways. So Dave, I look at both those things, yes, they were very painful, terribly painful. But we also solved them.

David Waldstein: Is it fair to say that with all the innovations that came in during your tenure that probably the game may have changed the most under your commissionership?

Bud Selig: What? I didn't hear that, Dave.

David Waldstein: That the game may have changed the most, the structure of the game may have changed the most under your commissionership.

Bud Selig: Dave, I think that's absolutely true. Yes, absolutely true. We were a game -- we were a sport resistant to change, as I said before, social institutions are generally resistant to change, and yes, I believe in those years that as commissioner that's the most change in baseball history. The answer is a very strong affirmative yes.

David Waldstein: Thanks, Bud.

Bud Selig: Thank you, Dave.

Operator: Our next question is from the line of Ken Davidoff from New York Post. Please proceed.

Ken Davidoff: Congratulations, Bud.

Bud Selig: Thank you, Kenny.

Ken Davidoff: You just touched on the turmoil, Bud, and I'm just wondering whether you were nervous at all, whether that might prevent you from getting in tonight and then as a follow-up to that, do you feel other people from your era deserve a similar macro view? I mean, clearly, the plusses far outweigh the minuses.

Bud Selig: Well, Ken, as I think I've said before and I think I've told you before, my job as the commissioner was to solve that problem and certainly, it was different and people who took it from the people who were trying to solve it and we did solve it. In fact, we've solved it in the way I think nobody thought possible. So do I believe that -- the writers are going to have to decide about the players. Did I think that may stop me? I don't know. But I do know this, for a sport even through the cocaine era and everything else that never had a drug testing program to be where we are today in spite of all the opposition and everything else.

I mean, I think we did, Ken, what I thought we should do and I'm very proud of that, frankly.

Ken Davidoff: And I know you can handle, Bud, I'm going to ask, even going back to the collusion. Did you think that might hurt your candidacy?

Bud Selig: No, I didn't. I really didn't. That was something I was not the commissioner during that era, obviously, and that was in fact well before -- well before my commissionership. But again, I have to say to you that when you look at everything that's happened in the last twenty-some years and the shape the sport is in as opposed to what it was in 1992, I do feel very good about that.

Ken Davidoff: Thanks so much, Bud. Congrats again.

Bud Selig: Thank you.

Jon Shestakofsky: This is John from the (unintelligible) and just wanted to note, we probably have time for just two more questions. Thanks.

Operator: Our next question is from the line of Bruce Levin from CBSchicago.com.
Please proceed.

Bruce Levin: Bud, congratulations on this great honor and (unintelligible).

Bud Selig: Thank you very much, thank you, Bruce.

Bruce Levin: None of this would have been possible without getting a consensus of the owners, which seems to be, in my mind, the most incredible thing that you were able to do that no other commissioner was able to do in history. How did you do that and once you were able to prove to them that a 30-0 vote was necessary for baseball to stand up and be strong all the time, were you able to have more leverage as time went on?

Bud Selig: Well, I worked at it, Bruce, as you well know. I really did. I know a lot of people would say sometimes it takes Bud too long and he's too cautious and this and that. But one thing I realized from having watched other commissioners. If you're going to accomplish what I wanted to, you're going to need to have everybody involved. So I spent endless hours with people on the phone, going to see them, yes, insisting on 30 votes. I used to kid this will be Chicago, Bruce, but that I was like Richard J. Daley. I wanted unanimous votes because I knew that that's the only way we could get things done.

And so I did and you're right. We had been badly fractured for two generations before. There's no question. Owners mad at owners. Owners mad at the union. Owners mad at commissioners. People mad -- everybody mad at everybody and as a result, we're getting nothing done. So I realized back in 1992 and 1993, Bruce, that I was going to have to spend the time endlessly sometimes on making sure that everybody felt a part of the process, and it turned out I did, and it did work, and it worked beautifully.

Bruce Levin: How tough did you have to be with people to get them to understand how important this was and how much history did you have to teach?

Bud Selig: A lot of history and you handle people differently. There was -- sometimes I had to get very tough and others just do a lot of explaining. In the end, trite as it may sound, trite as it may seem, I really had to convince them that it was in baseball's best interest and their best interest to do these things, which had not existed before.

Bruce Levin: Congrats.

Bud Selig: Thank you very much, Bruce. Thank you.

Jon Shestakofsky: Thank you, everyone. This is Jon at the Hall of Fame and unfortunately, we've run out of time here. I want to say, again, thank you to the commissioner for joining us on this historic day and once again, we congratulate you on your election to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Thank you very much.

Jon Shestakofsky: The commissioner and Mr. Schuerholz will be available in person here at the Gaylord Convention Center in the Woodrow Wilson ballroom tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. Eastern time. I'd also like to note that a transcript of this call will be available online within the next 48 hours at baseballhall.org. One other note, at 7:15, John Schuerholz will be available on a separate conference call, 7:15 Eastern Time, and that call-in number, I'm going to read right now in case you don't have it already and you'd like to participate. The call-in number is 212-231-2939.

Again, the call-in number for our 7:15 Eastern Time Conference Call this evening with John Schuerholz is 212-231-2939. We'll say it one more time, congratulations to the commissioner and we will speak with you on the other conference call line in about 15 minutes. Thank you.

Bud Selig: Thank you.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, that does conclude the conference call for today. We thank you for your participation and ask that you please disconnect your lines. Thank you.

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