

Now That Bud Selig Has Made it Official That He'll Retire, What's Next?

Written by Maury Brown
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**Selig is officially retiring.
Now the question is, who
will replace him?**

This time it counts. No, it's not the outcome of the All-Star Game, but rather that Bud Selig really, truly is retiring at the beginning of 2015. Many times prior Selig has said he would retire, but this time the league issued a statement that solidifies that the Selig tenure will be coming to a close. He will officially retire on January 24, 2015.

Selig said in a statement:

"It remains my great privilege to serve the game I have loved throughout my life. Baseball is the greatest game ever invented, and I look forward to continuing its extraordinary growth and addressing several significant issues during the remainder of my term.

"I am grateful to the owners throughout Major League Baseball for their unwavering support and for allowing me to lead this great institution. I thank our players, who give me unlimited enthusiasm about the future of our game. Together we have taken this sport to new heights and have positioned our national pastime to thrive for generations to come. Most of all, I would like to thank our fans, who are the heart and soul of our game."

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What's interesting is not that Selig actually is following through on his retirement (the Jan. 24, 2015 date is when his current contract expires and had said that when it was done, so was he with leading the league), but rather what will occur after.

Within the statement from the league it was said that "Selig will announce shortly a transition plan in preparation for his retirement, which will reorganize centralized Major League Baseball management." What that means is open to interpretation.

Nothing in the statement from the league mentions any search committee to find a replacement. When a league source was asked if any would be put together, the response was, "We'll see down the road."

We're over a year away from Selig's retirement, so we're more than a ways off. There should be no sense that the league is in some dire leadership vacuum at this point.

Early on, however, the fact that Selig's transition plan calls for a reorganizing of MLB's management, coupled with no clear notice of a search committee leads one to believe that the successor to Selig will likely be hand picked and internal to baseball. The fact that Selig is announcing it now would give him time to sell this replacement to the owners. Any replacement for Selig requires a written vote of approval by 75 percent of the 30 owners. Based upon the league constitution, the vote would take place no later than 6 months from Selig's contract expiration (July of 2014) and no earlier than 15 months from its expiration.

It is this timeframe that explains why Selig has made his notification official now. It aligns within the 15 month window to name his successor. It also allows Selig to shepherd in the replacement over time. In other words, the owners could vote as late as July of next year or as early as shortly after the end of the World Series.

The looming question is, who will that person be? There is no clear answer to that question, but it's possible that with the reorganization that Selig has for the transition, that Rob Manfred, MLB's Executive Vice President, Economics and League Affairs, could be that man. Manfred has been the point for labor negotiations with the MLBPA and matters of human resources

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since 1998. With Bob DuPuy leaving MLB as its president, Manfred has become baseball's #2 behind Selig.

There is time to speculate as to who will be the heir apparent. But no later than July of next year, right around the mid-point of the season, the owners will vote as to who will replace baseball's ninth commissioner. Selig has led Major League Baseball since September 9, 1992, when, as Chairman of the Major League Executive Council, he became interim Commissioner. He was unanimously elected the league's ninth Commissioner on July 9, 1998. Only Landis—baseball's first commissioner—will have held the post longer.



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