

Written by Maury Brown  
Wednesday, 15 May 2013 13:53

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Major League Baseball's 30 owners begin their two-day quarterly meetings in New York today, and with a continued discussion around expanded instant replay. A committee that includes former and current managers Tony La Russa, Joe Torre, Jim Leyland, and Mike Scioscia as well as executives such as Frank Robinson, John Schuerholz, and Mark Scapiro was created in 2009 to look into on-the-field matters such as instant replay. The media has focused more closely on instant replay in recent weeks after a blown call during the Angels-Astros game last week that saw umpire crew chief Fieldin Culbreth suspended two-games and fined for misapplication of the Official Baseball Rules. [According to Jeff Passan of Yahoo Sports!](#) there is "support, approval and, most vital, funding from ownership" into looking at expanded instant replay. But, according to sources, don't expect any changes to come about immediately. While there is support, how it is implemented and to what degree is still something that could have 30 differing views.

Beyond committee meetings, nothing earth-shattering is expected to come out of the meetings that occur today and tomorrow (although, anything is possible). While "something" could come out of the meetings, sources indicate there will not be movement on two languishing issues.

As has been the case since 2009, there is not expected to be any recommendations or movement on the issue of the Oakland Athletics moving to San Jose. With San Jose being part of the San Francisco Giants territory the current World Series Champions aren't in any hurry to relinquish the market.

The Dodgers still await MLB's approval on what is expected to be a \$6 to possibly \$8 billion television deal, and there has been a massive explosion in television rights fees across the league. With it, there has been renewed focus on the league's blackout policy. Both MLB and the NHL are defendants in a class-action lawsuit, and Senator John McCain (R-AZ) last week introduced the Television Consumer Freedom Act that would allow consumers to purchase channels on an a la carte basis. This could impact MLB Network and other networks, as well as league blackout policies. In speaking to the Senate Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet yesterday, McCain said that as part of the bill it, "seeks to end sports blackouts for teams that play in publicly financed stadiums. The antiquated government blackout rules were created in 1975 and are unfair to taxpayers who finance the

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vast majority of major stadiums these days.”

And yet with this renewed pressure nothing is on the agenda for the quarterly meetings to address the blackout policy at the local and regional level. As part of the new national television deal with FOX that kicks in next year, nationally broadcasted games that were previously blacked out on MLB Extra Innings and MLB.TV due to an exclusivity agreement will be lifted. But that's just the Saturday game of the week. The issue of local and regional blackouts—at least for the time being—are expected to remain.

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