

NO ON SECRET PAY

Judge Landis Rules Against Club Pay to Promising College Athletes

Chicago, Mar. 7. (AP)—Secret baseball contracts—the kind in which a college baseball player usually gets financial assistance for promising to join the paying club after graduation, are legally worthless, says Commissioner K. M. Landis.

Landis made the ruling in a case involving Anthony Ravich and the New York Yankees of the American league.

In a statement accompanying the rule, Landis said all club officials know such pacts have no standing in court but he wondered if the college players knew it.

"However, there is and can be no question whatsoever, that these legally worthless documents do serve a purpose—First, of deluding many of the players signing them into an erroneous belief that they are obligated and second, of establishing a moral obligation to go thru with the agreement," Landis' statement read.

The commissioner quoted George Weiss, vice president of the New York club and general manager of its farm system, as saying that the agreement with Ravich was not certified to the commissioner's office within 20 days as prescribed by baseball law because of the "effect it would have on his college athletic career."

Players, publicly receiving such financial aid either directly or by their parents, customarily are declared ineligible for further college competition as was Lou Boudreau, now manager of the Cleveland Indians by the University of Illinois in 1938.

Landis pointed out that sub-rosa pacts made it impossible for his office to check the number of players controlled by the clubs and often enabled those clubs to violate the player limit.

The commissioner said there had been suggestions that such secret documents as the scout's agreement to pay Ravich \$1,000 for his promise to sign a Yankee farm contract upon graduation be filed confidentially with his office to enable the student to continue his collegiate career.

"That, of course, is inconceivable," Landis added, "As it would include the entire baseball organization in the false pretense, in which the player and the club have engaged, that the player is honestly complying with college athletic eligibility rules, which in fact are being deliberately violated."

"The obvious impropriety of that situation is in no wise diminished by the fact that college athletic officials often are fully cognizant of that violation and are participants in them."

The commissioner declared that in the future clubs and affiliates which signed undergraduates to secret contracts would be denied the chance to re-sign them after the players had been declared free agents and that in addition the clubs and officers involved would be fined.