

SPORTS

The umpires strike back

BY RONALD BLUM
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA — In what might be their last chance to save 22 jobs, umpires went before a federal judge Tuesday asking for an injunction against the American and National leagues.

The Major League Umpires Association, in papers filed Monday in U.S. District Court, claimed the 22 are being terminated against their will. Union head Richie Phillips said "permanent unemployment ... is a virtual certainty" without a court order.

"The leagues' refusal to retain the 22 umpires, fully a third of the umpire work force, threatens to complete the destruction of the union's effectiveness as a collective bargaining agent," Phillips said in papers filed with the suit.

Management lawyers said they think the case is a rehash of earlier allegations. Baseball said the umpires aren't being fired, but that it accepted the resignations of the 22, effective after Wednesday's games, as a result of a failed mass resignation strategy the umpires embarked on after the All Star game.

The union filed a grievance against the AL and NL late Friday. Tuesday's hearing was before U.S. District Judge J. Curtis Joyner.

"Immediate injunctive relief is appropriate and necessary to maintain the status quo to permit the arbitrator to consider and act upon the dispute," the 16-page complaint said.

"Unless promptly enjoined, the leagues will not cease and desist from their unlawful course of action."

Umpires said they would be irreparably harmed if they are let go, partly because they would lose health insurance.

They also sued baseball July 26, but withdrew the case Aug. 16. Baseball says all the matters are covered by either binding arbitration or the National Labor Relations Board.

Umpires filed unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB's New York regional office Aug. 3, asking the agency to issue a complaint and to seek an injunction. The NLRB has not yet ruled on the charges.

"We're still evaluating the evidence," said Daniel Silverman, the NLRB's New York regional director, Monday. "I'm still hopeful we'll have a decision this week."

Presumably in an effort to humanize the case, the complaint listed all the umpires scheduled to be terminated along with their marital status and the number of children and grandchildren they have.

Umpires, who held a series of three conference calls Monday, said the sport would be injured if the 22, who have a combined 355 years of major league experience, were let go.

"The baseball-loving public will be harmed by having less than the best umpires in place during this critical portion of the 1999 season, as well as the playoffs," they said in a 34-page legal brief filed Monday.

The brief began with a quote from President Richard Nixon, who arbitrated a 1985 dispute between umpires and baseball.

"The leagues should recognize that umpires have a special relationship to the game, which is different from that of players," Nixon said.

"Umpires should not be treated as employees, but as judges who are independent of both players and owners, whose primary responsibility is to maintain the integrity of the game."

The brief went on to say that, unless the court issues an injunction, baseball "will succeed in destroying two of the most sacred principles in major league baseball: the independence and integrity of major league umpires and the sanctity of arbitrating disputes under the collective bargaining agreement."

Fearful baseball would lock them out after their labor contract expires Dec. 31, umpires announced July 14 they would quit en masse to try to force an early start to negotiations.

But the strategy backfired when 27 of the 68 umpires either refused to resign or quickly withdrew their resignations. Baseball then hired 25 new umpires from the minors and accepted 22 resignations, effective Sept. 2, even though all umpires tried to rescind them.

Acknowledging that umpires have split into pro- and anti-Phillips factions, the brief said "the union will effectively be gutted and rendered powerless" if the 22 are let go because they are among the most hard-core supporters of the union leadership. The court case in Philadelphia will be a key to Phillips' future.

"Obviously, if we win tomorrow's case in court, his stock goes up tremendously," NL umpire Terry Tata said. "If not, that's to be evaluated as time goes along."

Umpires now claim that they never intended to quit and that the resignations were merely symbolic. They also claimed AL ump Drew Coble, one of the 22, never actually resigned.

Bowden not comfortable in Death Valley just yet

BY MARK PRATT
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLEMSON — Tommy Bowden now has his dream job as Clemson's head coach, but he says soaking up the atmosphere of Death Valley on opening day Saturday against Marshall will have to wait.

He won't savor touching Howard's Rock. He won't relish sprinting down the hill through a gauntlet of fans. He won't bask in the adulation of more than 80,000 orange-clad faithful.

He'd like to, he said Tuesday. It's just that he has more pressing matters on his mind, like how the Tigers will deal with the Thundering Herd.

"There's so many problems, not so much with the team, but you've got new staff communicating on the sidelines for the first time, you've got special teams, and those are things you worry about more so than lining up and running down the hill," said Bowden, who was hired in December.

He also has to figure out how to slow down a Marshall team with a clear goal — to go undefeated, just like Bowden's Tulane team did last year.

"We have a really good chance at 13-0 this year," Marshall linebacker Girardie Mercer said. "All the pieces of the puzzle are here."

Marshall's returning quarterback, Chad Pennington, threw for 3,419 yards and 24 touchdowns last season. Running back Doug Chapman is aiming for his fourth straight 1,000-yard season. They'll operate behind an offensive line with an enormous size advantage and the defense returns 10 starters.

"They will put a veteran team on the field with depth and that has talent," Bowden said.

In fact, Bowden said he would rather not be opening against a team the caliber of Marshall, which went 12-1 last season, won the Mid-American Conference title and beat Louisville 48-29 in the Motor City Bowl.

Clemson opened the 1998 and '97 seasons with victories over Division I-AA teams.

"I'd like a game where I can make some mistakes ... and still win by 21, 28 points," Bowden said.

That's not a sentiment shared by the players.

"It's really important we start off with a I-AA team rather than a I-AA team," junior quarterback Brandon Streeter said. "Starting with a good I-AA team like Marshall will really help us see where we are."

Win or lose, Bowden doesn't want Clemson fans to rush to judge a team coming off a 3-8 season, its worst since 1975.

"The problems didn't happen overnight and the problems can't be corrected overnight," he said. "What we'll start Saturday is a barometer for how far the program has to go."

He has confidence the Tigers, always more at ease with the run than the pass, will feel comfortable in the balanced attack that made Tulane's offense so prolific.

"I think eventually they will. I just don't know when they will. I think eventually we'll put a pretty good product on the field offensively," he said.

THE SLATE (LATE GAMES NOT INCLUDED)

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Eastern Division	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10	Str
Atlanta	83	50	.624	-	9-1	L-1
New York	80	52	.606	2.5	6-4	W-1
Philadelphia	67	63	.515	14.5	3-7	L-4
Montreal	55	76	.420	27	5-5	L-1
Florida	53	78	.405	29	3-7	L-6

Central Division

Houston	78	55	.586	-	5-5	L-1
Cincinnati	76	54	.585	.5	5-5	W-1
Pittsburgh	65	67	.492	12.5	4-6	W-1
St. Louis	63	69	.477	14.5	1-9	L-7
Milwaukee	57	73	.438	19.5	2-8	L-1
Chicago	54	76	.415	22.5	3-7	L-1

West Division

Arizona	79	53	.598	-	9-1	W-3
San Francisco	70	61	.534	8.5	8-2	W-3
Los Angeles	61	70	.466	17.5	7-3	W-1
San Diego	60	72	.455	19	5-5	W-2
Colorado	60	73	.451	19	6-4	L-1

WILD CARD RACE

American League	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10	Str
Boston	73	58	.557	8.5	6-4	W-4
Oakland	71	60	.542	7.5	5-5	L-2
Toronto	70	63	.526	12.5	5-5	W-1
Seattle	65	66	.496	13.5	5-5	W-1
Chicago	62	70	.480	19	3-7	L-2
Baltimore	58	73	.446	23	4-6	W-1
Tampa Bay	58	73	.443	23.5	6-4	W-1
Minnesota	55	74	.426	24.5	5-5	L-1

National League

New York	80	52	.606	2.5	6-4	W-1
Cincinnati	76	54	.585	.5	5-5	W-1
San Francisco	70	61	.534	8.5	8-2	W-3
Philadelphia	67	63	.515	14.5	3-7	L-4
Pittsburgh	65	67	.492	12.5	4-6	W-1
St. Louis	63	69	.477	14.5	1-9	L-7
Los Angeles	61	70	.466	17.5	7-3	W-1
San Diego	60	72	.455	19	5-5	W-2

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Eastern Division	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10	Str
New York	81	49	.623	-	8-2	W-4
Boston	73	58	.557	8.5	6-4	W-4
Toronto	70	63	.526	12.5	5-5	W-1
Baltimore	58	73	.446	23	4-6	W-1
Tampa Bay	58	73	.443	23.5	6-4	W-1

Central Division

Cleveland	80	50	.615	-	7-3	W-1
Chicago	62	70	.480	19	3-7	L-2
Minnesota	55	74	.426	24.5	5-5	L-1
Detroit	52	78	.400	28	5-5	W-1
Kansas City	51	80	.389	29.5	2-8	L-4

West Division

Texas	79	53	.598	-	7-3	L-1
Oakland	71	60	.542	7.5	5-5	L-2
Seattle	65	66	.496	13.5	5-5	W-1
Anaheim	51	79	.392	27	2-8	L-6

TUESDAY'S TOP NEWS

• **USC free safety Arturo Freeman reportedly out for four weeks after spleen injury**

• **Pete Sampras withdraws from U.S. Open with ailing back**

• **Tiger Woods sets new standard in World Golf Rankings**

• **Broncos bypass Bubba Brister, give starting QB job to Brian Griese, son of Hall of Famer Bob Griese**

• **Florida Panthers' Dino Cicarelli's back problems cause him to retire after 19 seasons**

• **Mets' Edgardo Alfonzo joins Ty Cobb as second player in history to go 6-for-6 with three home runs in one game**

• **Former National League MVP Kevin Mitchell arrested Tuesday for assaulting his father**

Coaches pick Arkansas for SEC cross country titles

CROSS COUNTRY ROUNDUP
THE GAMECOCK

SEC cross country coaches have picked Arkansas to sweep both men's and women's conference titles in 1999.

The Arkansas men's team, which has won eight straight SEC titles, was a nearly unanimous choice to continue that trend. The Razorbacks received all but one first-place vote in the preseason poll.

If Arkansas proves the coaches right, it will have captured its 26th straight conference title, dating back to 1974 when UA started its reign of 17 straight South-west Conference titles.

Alabama, second in the men's poll, received the other first-place vote. Tennessee, the 1998 conference runner-up, was in third with 65 total points behind Arkansas' 81 and Alabama's 70.

Rounding out the poll were, in order: Florida, Georgia, Louisiana State, Auburn, Mississippi, Kentucky and Vanderbilt.

In the women's version of the poll, the Lady Razorbacks were picked to stay at the top of the SEC after winning five straight titles after entering the league in 1991 and another in 1998.

Arkansas received 10 first-place votes on the women's side for a total of 120 points. Florida was given the other two first-place votes and finished with 109 points. Tennessee (100 points), Alabama (83) and Georgia (81) rounded out the top five.

The rest of the poll included, in order: Vanderbilt, South Carolina, Auburn, Mississippi State, Louisiana State, Kentucky and Mississippi.

The 1999 SEC Cross Country Championships, hosted by Vanderbilt, will be held Oct. 30 at the Vaughan's Creek Course in Nashville, Tenn.

SOUTH CAROLINA CROSS COUNTRY SCHEDULE Fall 1999

Sept. 3	Charleston So. Invitational
Sept. 11	Gamecock Invitational
Sept. 27	Roy Griak
Oct. 2	Disney Invitational
Oct. 16	S.C. State Championships
Oct. 30	SEC Championship
Nov. 13	NCAA Southeast Regional (at Furman)
Nov. 22	NCAA Championships (at Indiana)

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