Opinion

Los Angeles Dodgers are ruining baseball

By ANTHONY ANGELILLO
Copy Editor

I used to love the offseason in Major League Baseball. The rumors, the waiting and the feeling that every team has at least a chance to flip its future with one big move.

Then the Los Angeles Dodgers show up and there goes another top free agent getting paid a ridiculous amount of money.

This is not just about jealousy. I am a huge fan of MLB, with the big moments and stars it creates. What gets under my skin is how predictable the ending has become. When the Dodgers want someone, 99.9% of the time, they get them.

Look at the last few seasons. The Dodgers landed starting pitcher/designated hitter Shohei Ohtani on a 10-year, $700 million deal with massive deferrals. They grabbed starting pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto on a 12-year, $325 million contract, plus the posting fee. Then, Los Angeles added starting pitcher Blake Snell on a five-year deal reportedly worth $182 million.

It kept piling on with more star power, including international ace Roki Sasaki. This offseason, the Dodgers did it again, signing Kyle Tucker to a four-year, $240 million deal and closer Edwin Diaz to a three-year, $69 million deal.

This is about more than just assembling a team; it's about creating a monopoly that can't be stopped.

Then, we have the way their money gets moved around. Ohtani defers $68 million of his $70 million average annual salary. Tucker's contract details also include deferrals, because the Dodgers have basically turned deferring money into a team habit rather than a rare exception.

I get it. Deferrals are legal. Teams can use them, and players agree to them. However, when the Dodgers repeatedly rely on deferrals, it no longer seems like a strategic decision but a loophole that MLB consistently ignores.

This is where the lack of a salary cap matters. MLB does not operate like the NFL, NBA or NHL, where a cap forces real trade-offs.

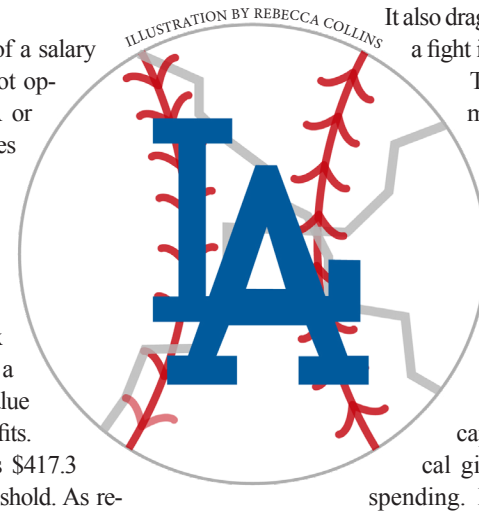
MLB's competitive balance tax (CBT) for 2025 is set at $241 million. The CBT allows MLB to see how far over the luxury tax line a team went, based on a player's average annual value (AAV) and additional benefits.

The Dodgers' CBT was $417.3 million, exceeding the threshold. As repeat offenders, they paid a record $169.4 million in the luxury tax and spent $347 million on player contracts, totaling about $515 million.

Combine the six MLB teams with the lowest payrolls and the Dodgers still outspent them by $5 million, with their luxury tax payment exceeding 12 teams' payrolls. It's absolutely ridiculous and makes MLB feel like anything but a fair fight.

Fans will argue that MLB owners should spend more. I hear that, and sometimes it is true, but this argument ignores the reality for many teams.

Not every franchise has the same local revenue. Not every revenue prints money. Fans get told to be patient, trust the farm system and support the team. Then the Dodgers show up with another superstar like it's nothing and patience starts to feel like a scam.


ILLUSTRATION BY REBECCA COLLINS

It also drags the entire sport toward a fight it cannot afford.

The MLB labor agreement expires on Dec. 1, 2026, and a 2027 lockout seems likely as the sport heads toward another spending fight neither side wants to lose.

Owners will blame the Dodgers and argue for a salary cap, appearing hypocritical given their own lack of spending. Players will oppose a cap, fearing it will limit their earnings and shift power to owners.

Through all the fighting, the fans will get the short end of the stick, watching a bunch of rich people argue about being richer.

The Dodgers didn't ruin baseball overnight, but the biggest factor no one talks about is their 2011 Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing.

This led to terms and settlements tied to how the league would treat the Dodgers' local TV money for revenue-sharing purposes. Then came the massive Time Warner Cable deal that created SportsNet LA, an $8.35 billion contract that escalates over time through 2038.

Under the typical revenue-sharing formula, local TV income is pooled and shared among teams. However, due to prior settlements, the Dodgers' deal caps their shareable amount, allowing them to keep more net TV revenue than other clubs.

The Dodgers earn over $300 million annually from SportsNet LA, while the Milwaukee Brewers would make around $35 million.

So when people tell me the Dodgers' success is just good leadership, I don't fully buy it.

Yes, the front office and farm system are strong, but they've had a long financial head start. Add deferrals and star hunting, and the playing field isn't even fair anymore.

I don't blame players for taking the money. If someone offers you security, you take it. I also do not blame Dodgers fans for enjoying it. Every fan wants their team to act like it wants to win.

The problem is MLB is letting one team turn winning into an assembly line, then acting surprised when everyone starts calling the league unfair.

Baseball shouldn't punish ambition but must protect belief. It works best when April feels wide open and fanbases see their teams win in October.

If this continues, the biggest disappointment won't be the Dodgers' dominance but rather the rest of MLB losing its passion and no longer caring.

'But why' is the 'Nihilist Penguin' ridiculous?

By ADRIHANNA COLLINS
Contributing Writer

"But why?"

This is the question acclaimed filmmaker Werner Herzog and the rest of the internet seem to be asking after the "nihilist penguin" went viral recently.

The nihilist penguin is based on the 2007 Herzog documentary "Encounters at the End of the World." The documentary is a study of the animals and the people who study them at an American research center on the southern tip of Antarctica's Ross Island, McMurdo Station.

The section of the documentary that went viral pertained to an Adelie penguin colony where a penguin became disoriented and headed for the mountains, abandoning the colony.

"One of them caught our eye, the one in the center," Herzog says as he narrates the documentary. "He would neither go toward the feeding grounds at the edge of the ice, nor return to the colony. Shortly afterward, we saw him heading straight for the mountains, some 70 kilometers away. Doctor Ainslie explained even if he caught him and brought him back to the colony, he would immediately head right back for the mountains. But, why?"


ILLUSTRATION BY LILLIAN CURTIN

This penguin blew up with many finding the penguin to be a symbol of hope and adventure, or, according to others, on a suicide mission.

Clips went viral of people recreating the meme or turning it into various edits.

The White House even posted a photo of the nihilist penguin carrying an American flag walking hand in hand with President Donald Trump into the mountains with a flag of Greenland. Homeland Security also reposted a video implying that Americans know the answer to this, but why?

But why do I hate it?

Simply because it's not that deep.

First off, I take offense to the term "nihilist penguin." The nihilist penguin is not even a nihilist. The term, as defined by Merriam-Webster, means "a viewpoint that traditional values and beliefs are unfounded, and that existence is senseless and useless."

So, with that definition in mind, wouldn't the penguin reject society by laying down in the snow waiting for the cold hands of death? But no, instead the penguin runs towards the mountain in search of something.

If anything, the nihilist penguin is a Faustian, aka someone who "makes or does something for present gain without regard for future cost or consequences." He runs towards the mountain, abandoning the ocean and his colony that provides him with survival, for the sake of some fleeting whim.

Even attaching some sort of philosophical ideology to this penguin is incredibly unnecessary, considering the video is about a penguin that lost its mind and is heading towards inevitable death.

Instead, people project their own feelings of desperation onto the penguin. As one X user says, "If this penguin doesn't penetrate your psyche so deeply that you are compelled to finally drop everything & chase your dreams, then you're doomed forever bro."

Well bro, I'm not affected by this penguin because I have a sense of responsibility and an understanding of the natural world.

Herzog's documentaries often tackle the idea that the natural world often doesn't fit in the structures that our society likes to adopt. Sometimes things just happen. They may be bizarre and unfortunate, but the world is odd and unexplainable. Yet we watch the nihilist penguin through a human lens that projects meaning onto something that has none.

According to the Sustainability Directory, avian disorientation is "the impairment of a bird's natural ability to navigate or determine its correct flight direction… the consequence is often deviation from established migration routes." It's a natural part of the world, but it's sad, so it makes people uncomfortable. Uncomfortable things make people search for reasons when there aren't any.

The penguin getting disoriented and running into the mountains is odd and unexplainable, but the world is odd and explainable. We don't know why the penguin ran to the mountains, and probably, neither did the penguin.

Overall, people are projecting their own anxieties about the state of their lives, and this desire to escape their responsibilities onto this penguin. The penguin isn't headed towards some further destiny by abandoning everything it knew, and neither are you if you do "side quests" instead of your work.

Confusion is unsatisfying, and people project answers on the penguin to feel adequate. When the penguin is framed to be plotting rather than confused, it becomes inspiring because intention is powerful in contrast to randomness. The added captions, music and commentary work well because it stabilizes the clip into having meaning. The penguin is no longer wandering or disoriented; it's leaving for bigger and better things. The nihilist penguin doesn't capture indifference; it allows people's complicated feelings to look like a choice

You are not the nihilist penguin, and you will never be the nihilist penguin. You are just stressed out from mounting assignments and putting your sad little feelings onto this little creature.

Go out and learn to cope instead of putting it all on this poor penguin.