

December 7, 1939

"Old Fox" takes aim at the Pinstripes...

In a move aimed directly at the New York Yankees, American League owners at baseball's annual winter meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, accept a proposal by Washington Senators owner Clark "Old Fox" Griffith prohibiting the league's pennant winner from buying, selling or trading players with the league during the following season ... the rule, which the National League refuses to adopt, reads:

"The championship club in either major league shall not be permitted to acquire a player contract within its' own league except through waiver channels until it is no longer champion."



Clark Griffith
Washington Senators Owner

Surprisingly, New York Yankees President Ed Barrows votes for the rule, admitting he did so just to make it unanimous ... Barrows asserts that his 1939 World Champions, with the exception of veterans Red Ruffing and Monte Pearson, were mostly a product of the team's minor league system.

American League President William Harridge announces that the rule is effective immediately.

In other business, both leagues agree to limit each club to seven night games, and the American League amends the rule prohibiting night baseball on Saturday ... the American League also rescinds its rule calling for the previous year's pennant winning manager to manage the all-star team and appoints Boston's Joe Cronin to be the manager for the 1940 game.

The American League goes on record opposing any proposals to add additional post-season games as proposed by the Brooklyn Dodgers' Larry MacPhail ... the junior circuit refuses to name a committee to meet with a similar committee from the National League to review a possible 16-team playoff.

Postscript - Within two years, the rule that Griffith predicted would "live forever" is drawing its last breath ... at the 1941 All-Star break, with the Yankees residing in first place and defending American League champion Detroit in fifth, Barrow and Tiger owner Walter O. Briggs propose that the rule be abolished at the end of the season ... three of the eight AL owners vote against Barrow's and Brigg's proposal, but the motion is adopted on July 7.