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## ***Mets and Yankees Brace for a Future Without Smokeless Tobacco***

By TIM ROHAN and J. DAVID GOODMAN MARCH 22, 2016

TAMPA, Fla. — Midway through spring training, the [Yankees](#) posted a sign on a bulletin board in their clubhouse telling players that anyone wanting “nicotine replacement therapy supplies (gum, lozenges or patches) — to kick the habit” should see the team trainer.

On Tuesday, Yankees and [Mets](#) players learned that the [New York City Council](#) had passed legislation by a 44-3 vote to prohibit the use of all tobacco products, including the smokeless tobacco popular among players, at all ticketed sporting sites in the city, including [Yankee Stadium](#) and [Citi Field](#). The ban could go into effect before opening day, less than two weeks away.

“We knew it might happen,” Yankees Manager Joe Girardi said. “The players will be fine. You deal with it. There’s other laws people pass we have to follow, right?”

The Yankees and the Mets had been put on notice because several major cities had passed similar legislation at the urging of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, a lobbying group in Washington. San Francisco, Boston and Los Angeles have bans this season. Chicago has enacted legislation that will begin midyear. A ban in California will begin in 2017. A similar bill has been introduced in Toronto.

If Mayor Bill de Blasio signs the bill the City Council just passed, by the end of the year, players will be banned from using smokeless tobacco in seven ballparks, almost 25 percent of those in the major leagues. “We should be very close to a tipping point, where the only thing that makes sense is for the league and the players to agree on a

uniform law eliminating the use of smokeless tobacco,” Matthew L. Myers, the lobbying group’s president, said in a telephone interview.

Despite the meetings about tobacco use and the signs in the clubhouse, Yankee and Mets players still had questions about the law. How much would the fine be? How would it be enforced? What about their opinions?

Andrew Miller, a Yankee reliever who no longer uses smokeless tobacco, pointed out: “It’s a completely legal substance. It’s available to purchase at any 7-Eleven.”

One Yankee who said he did not use the substance, Chase Headley, wondered, “How is it legal around town, around wherever else, but just at the ballpark it’s not?”

Carlos Beltran, who does not use smokeless tobacco, gave his teammates free advice. He said they could continue to use it, but make sure not to get caught — in other words, find a place where no one was watching because “Major League Baseball has cameras all over the place.”

M.L.B. sent a message to all the teams reminding them to comply with local laws. In New York, Corey Johnson, the council member who sponsored the law, said in a telephone interview that “the teams have agreed that they’re not going to allow it to happen.”

Johnson said that signs would be posted in Yankee Stadium and Citi Field and that a system of fines would be worked out. In San Francisco, a first-time offender is fined a maximum of \$100, and a second-time offender caught within a year of the first violation is fined \$200. For each additional violation within a year of the first offense, the fine jumps to a maximum of \$500.

Enforcing the fine may prove complicated for the teams themselves. At least a few Yankees and several Mets use smokeless tobacco on the field. Mets outfielder Yoenis Cespedes often smokes cigarettes around

the park; that, too, would be banned by the new legislation. Last season, Juan Uribe, then with the Mets, mixed his smokeless tobacco with honey and Kahlua, kept it in a large plastic bag and shared it with other players.

“I don’t foresee anybody protesting or picketing,” Miller said. “It’ll be interesting to see, if somebody gets hit with a fine or something like that, the reaction.”

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/23/sports/the-mets-and-the-yankees-brace-for-a-future-without-smokeless-tobacco.html?emc=edit\\_tnt\\_20160322&nid=60534081&tntemail0=y&r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/23/sports/the-mets-and-the-yankees-brace-for-a-future-without-smokeless-tobacco.html?emc=edit_tnt_20160322&nid=60534081&tntemail0=y&r=0)