

# FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of the  
Hot Stove League  
Eastern Nebraska Division  
1988 Season

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Gentlemen:

I think that we can agree that the 1988 Hot Stove League draft was an unqualified good time. Congratulations to each of you for your diligent preparation and keen baseball savvy. It looks like 1988 will be the year that parity invaded our league. In looking over the teams, from top to bottom it appears that almost every team is a potential threat to dethrone the reigning Tigers.

I am enclosing Opening Day Rosters for the ten league teams, based upon the initial draft. Whenever a trade is consummated between owners and sanctioned by our trade committee, please notify me of the particulars of the trade, so that I can make the changes on the official rosters and keep each of you current.

Also enclosed you will find a summary of our predictions for the outcome of this year's pennant race. Fox has apparently pulled off another quiet draft coup, as his Pirates are the consensus pick to finish atop the league standings this year. On behalf of all of my Royal players, thank you for taking the monkey off of our back this year. Predicted to finish second for a third consecutive year are my precious Royals, followed in the money by those accursed Red Sox. Predicted to finish out of the money this year, in order, are the Tigers, Braves, Cardinals, Mudhens, Cubs, Reds, and finally, the Blues. Looks like another long year, Brother.

It is interesting to note that the Pirates and the Royals were consistently picked to finish in the top few slots, with the lowest prediction for the Royals being fourth, and one fifth place vote cast for the Pirates. By way of contrast, the Red Sox, our consensus pick for third place, received votes all over the board, including two predictions for seventh place, and one prediction for eighth place. Guess who predicted eighth place for the Red Sox? If you guessed the Possum, you are right. The underhanded and guileful Possum is once again trying to lull certain of us to sleep, so that he might by virtue of his bait-and-switch gimmick, or the nut-and-shell game tactic, or some other sleazy maneuver, pick our cupboards clean via the trading process. While most of us are well versed in the unctuous tactics available in the Possum's arsenal, beware, Magpie and Jigger, of this used car salesman in financial consultant's clothing.

The rainbow coalition, Magpie's Reds and Brother's Blues, has been rather uniformly selected to occupy the bowels of the league this year. Snickler and his Cubs were able to wrestle away a couple

of predicted last place finishes, no doubt based more upon his anticipated managerial trading gaffes than the team selected by him during the draft, which ain't half bad.

Jigger has apparently established instantaneous credibility with the other league owners and managers, garnering two predictions for a fourth place finish, a predicted fifth place finish, and one for sixth place. Evidently buying the house next door to mine was the best thing that ever happened to Jigger, as my virtual storehouse of baseball knowledge has apparently transcended our adjoining walls.

Wedged tightly together in the middle of the pack, according to our predictions, are the Tigers, Cardinals and Braves. Absent the unexpected, these boys will do no better than scrap with the Possum for a chunk of the third place dough.

And now for a few of Skipper's annual post-draft observations, by Skipper's revised predicted order of finish:

#### Royals Raves

Biggest coup: Gary Gaetti in the fourth round -- the spark the Royals need to get out of the bridesmaid seat.

Worst blunder: Not lobbying hard enough for a \$100 entry fee this year.

Reason for draft success/failure: Incredible baseball acumen.

You heard it here first: Royals take it, from wire to wire.

#### Pirate Poop

Biggest coup: Will Clark in the third.

Worst blunder: Marty Barrett as top second baseman.

Reason for draft success/failure: Uncanny imitation of silent Orv.

You heard it here first: Pirates come up short in pitching department to finish distant second to Royals.

#### Cardinal Chatter

Biggest coup: Picking up Kal Daniels in the ninth round.

Worst blunder: Picking two utter slugs at third base.

Reason for draft success/failure: Oodles of money to purchase every available technological baseball drafting aid.

You heard it here first: The Cards finally finish in the money after three gravely disappointing seasons.

### Sock Talk

Biggest coup: Jose Canseco in the sixth round.

Worst blunder: Selecting Frank White in the first year he is eligible for Social Security benefits.

Reason for draft success/failure: Dishonesty, deceit, paucity of scruples.

You heard it here first: Possum indicted for securities fraud, able to devote full-time to attempted fleecings of neophyte managers.

### Braves Blasts

Biggest coup: Gregg Walker in the sixteenth round.

Worst blunder: Not knowing that Fernando has ballooned up to 370 pounds.

Reason for draft success/failure: Forty free hours per week (while at work) to devote to Hot Stove League.

You heard it here first: Underbelly picks up overtime hours at work so as to have more time to consider trade proposals and supplemental draft selections.

### Mudhen Mutterings

Biggest coup: Keith Hernandez in the seventh round.

Worst blunder: Relief tandem of Bedrosian/Aase.

Reason for draft success/failure: Proximity to Skipper.

You heard it  
here first: Jigger pilots expansion franchise to respectable sixth place finish.

### Tiger Tales

Biggest coup: Nothing comes to mind.

Worst blunder: Mistakenly believing that Robin Yount still qualifies as a shortstop.

Reason for draft  
success/failure: Homosexual affair with Joe Garagiola.

You heard it  
here first: Tigers stumble to lower division finish.

### Cub Clamor

Biggest coup: Rubin Sierra in the sixth round.

Worst blunder: Picking Eddie Murray for the seventeenth consecutive year.

Reason for draft  
success/failure: Fundamental misunderstanding of league scoring, goals and principles.

You heard it  
here first: Snickler unanimously voted by major league ballpark vendors "Men of the Year."

### Reds Rantings

Biggest coup: Elbowing his way into the league over myriad more qualified candidates.

Worst blunder: Sprinkling roster with untested youth and aged has-beens.

Reason for draft  
success/failure: Rookie jitters.

You heard it  
here first: Magpie earns ire of other league owners/managers by introducing first female to league, his new co-owner/ manager, Charlotte the Harlot.

### Blues News

Biggest coup: Danny Tartabull in the fifth round.

Worst blunder: Paul Molitor (average, 87 games per season) as top draft choice.

Reason for draft  
success/failure: Blind loyalty to parent K.C. ballclub.

You heard it  
here first: Brother repeats as cellar-dweller, threatening to foist nickname Underbelly  
away from Braves' pilot.

### Epilogue

1988 looks like another fine season of spirited competition in the Hot Stove League, Eastern Nebraska Division. Look forward to receiving the first mailing of statistics from our loyal statistician, Underbelly.

Let the games begin!

Skipper