

FROM THE BULLPEN

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Eastern Nebraska Division
1989 Season

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Dear Fellow Baseball Mavens:

Salutations and a heartfelt welcome to another issue of From the Bullpen. I must apologize for the delay in getting this issue out to you, but my enthusiasm has been dampened by the crippling rash of injuries which has beleaguered the once-powerful Senators, whose meteoric plunge in the standings can best be compared to the downward spiral of Underbelly's investment portfolio with Bridges Investment Counsel. As McBlunder can surely confirm, life in the Hot Stove League is not always fair, and to the good and wise do not always go the spoils of victory.

And since we have broached the topic, I have been informed by Baby Trumpetfish, investment manager of the Red Cardinal/Blue Nun Baseball Card Investment Fund, that in just a few short months the Fund portfolio has increased in value nearly twofold. Comparing that with the negative return fashioned by the unctuous (oily to you, Shamu) stockbrokers over at the Bridges Investment Counsel, I guess we can figure out where my vast future earnings will be invested.

But now to the task at hand, sizing up the 1989 Supplemental Draft. I think the following is a fair commentary on this year's annual shoring-up process.

Red Sox

On paper and by historical perspective, Possum did little to bolster his squad's chances of recapturing the coveted league jewel. Scott Garrelts was a so-so pick, and Ivan Calderon would be fine except for the fact that he used up his yearly quota of 162 cortisone shots in the first week of the season. His aching right shoulder closely resembles a spaghetti strainer.

On paper, Possum's selection of Glenn Wilson in the outfield is, at best, laughable. Wilson may be a crackerjack at lubing Yugos, but his skills on the diamond compare favorably with Shamu's adeptness on the basketball court. Of course, we have to take into account the "Possum" factor, which

may very well result in Wilson's transformation from baseball buffoon to Hall-of-Famer. As Underbelly so adroitly put it, "On a sleepy Sunday afternoon in Omaha, Nebraska, Glenn Wilson's baseball career made a dramatic turn-around."

One other item about Possum's supplemental draft which requires commentary. As you know, Possum selected Scott Terry, a starting pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals, in the fourth round of the Sunday supplemental draft. At the time, Terry had 114 points. After being brutally battered by the Cubs in his outing that same day, giving up five home runs and losing a jugful of points (23), Possum coyly called me on Monday and informed me that a serious "mutual mistake" had taken place at the supplemental draft, which must be rectified immediately. It seems that Possum really meant to draft another righthanded starting Cardinal pitcher by the name of Ken Hill, who had 112 points at the time of the supplemental draft, 2 less than Scott Terry. Due to his confusion caused by his concern over the health of Magpie's daughter, Possum had inadvertently chirped out Scott Terry's name instead of the intended, coveted Ken Hill. Because Possum allegedly made the statement that the pitcher he was drafting was black, and Scott Terry is not black, by Possum's way of thinking, a mutual mistake was made by all of the owners and managers of the Hot Stove League.

Possum has raised a good point. These types of mistakes do happen, and in the spirit of fundamental fairness and good conscience upon which this league is grounded, Possum's unfortunate boo-boo should be rectified. Which brings up a couple of other points. During the initial draft, during the second round, while I apparently verbally drafted Andy VanSlyke of the Pittsburgh Pirates, of course I meant to select Kevin Mitchell of the San Francisco Giants. I think all of you heard me mention that I was picking a "black" outfielder in the National League, and if memory serves, I believe that I mentioned something about him being a former gang member. Tragically and coincidentally, in the third round of the initial draft, another one of those crazy mistakes happened to me. While the nine of you apparently heard me utter the name David Cone of the New York Mets, I am embarrassed to say that I thought I was selecting Rick Reuschel of the National League's San Francisco Giants. Heh, heh! Well, my face is red now that I have to finally admit this to you, but I am sure I mentioned something about "Big Daddy" when I mistakenly selected David Cone. So, while we are rectifying Possum's unfortunate error, I think it only fair to allow me to replace Andy VanSlyke and David Cone with Kevin Mitchell and Rick Reuschel. I understand that Possum will be scheduling a conference call with all of the owners to discuss this situation in the upcoming weeks.

Tribe

Congratulations to Underbelly, who appears to have discovered a winning formula, and has added in the finishing touches via the supplemental draft. Picking up a proven reliever like Jeff Russell, a fast finisher like Chris Bosio, and a time-tested shortstop like Jerry Browne was nothing short of genius. Snapping up Teddy Higuera after his summary discharge from the Chiefs' roster was the act of a baseball mastermind, and a brazen slap in the face to Baby Trumpetfish as well. Given the savvy supplemental selections of our indefatigable scorekeeper, I think that we can all count on accurate

statistics for the rest of the year, since Underbelly now has a vested interest in the league numbers, unlike last year.

Mudhens

As we all suspected, once stripped of the ability to cherry pick at the supplemental draft, Sandjigger has displayed his true colors. The boisterous sun-worshipper could not even muster up four picks in this year's draft, although the Mudhens surely had at least four gaping holes prior to the supplemental draft (let me draw everyone's attention to Kal Daniels, now with 221 points, and Charlie Hough, now with 18.5 points). Let's face it, Sandjigger, you choked worse than Mama Cass. Fortunately for the Mudhens, Sandjigger was able to stumble onto Dave Gallagher, and I was big-hearted enough to bring to Sandjigger's attention that Tim Burke was available in the supplemental draft. So, all in all, things weren't as bad as they could have been for the Mudhens, although Sandjigger's squadron did drop from second to fifth as a result of his impotent performance at the supplemental draft.

Chiefs

Baby Trumpetfish had a pretty ho-hum supplemental draft this year. Not spectacular, but not terrible, either. Mike Morgan will have to prove himself over a whole season, but veteran performers Uribe and Riles should be steady back-ups for the Chiefs. Lonnie "Skates" Smith will provide some interesting moments in the field. Notice that for all his apparent miscues in the field, Smith has yet to be charged with an error this season. The only plausible explanation is, as noted by baseball savant Bill James, Lonnie Smith misjudges so many balls hit to him that he has actually become quite proficient at overcoming and disguising his own errors. He is able to discern by the pitch of the thud of the baseball as it glances off his cleats, precisely which direction and how far the ball will carry. He has made a career out of adjusting to his own misjudgments.

Reds

As this issue of From the Bullpen goes to print, it looks like Magpie probably got the best of the rest of us at the supplemental draft. While the rest of us stewed and fretted over picking Von Hayes, knowing he would fade bigger than Sandjigger's hopes of finding a date he can take out in public, Magpie quickly snapped up the Philadelphia Terror, who then promptly had the flame under his rear end rekindled. In short, there isn't a one of us who wouldn't like to have his 512 points bolstering our outfield.

Likewise, Magpie's selections of Tom Glavine and Jay Howell to round out his pitching staff should prove propitious. Look for Magpie's Reds to chatter their way into the pennant race this year.

Tigers

And I thought McBlunder was a rotten judge of talent. WhiteSot's supplemental selections of

Camaniti, Valle, Finley and Bielecki rank right down there with some of the biggest stinkers this league has ever seen. For a moment there, I thought that WhiteSot had suffered a stroke during the supplemental draft, but since he was able to move all of his appendages and wasn't slurring his speech, I was able to rule that out. Whatever the explanation for WhiteSot's lack of meaningful brain wave activity during the supplemental draft, he has sufficiently urinated on himself to ensure the crowning of a new champion this year.

Pirates

Felix Fermin. Craig Worthington. Kevin Brown. John Smoltz. My goodness, where were the rest of us when Pipsqueak was snatching up these four plums. By the looks of things, it appears as if Pipsqueak and WhiteSot got together before the draft and devised some sort of crafty new system of drafting players. While Pipsqueak managed to get a short dose of adrenalin to scratch his way up to sixth place, unless he is able to put together some blockbuster trades, his miserable pitching staff will drag his beloved Pirates down to the level of the Cubs and Senators.

Cubs

By drafting the submarginal quartet of Terry Kennedy, Bert Blyleven, Alex Espanosa (Masterspeller strikes again) and Jeff Ballard, Shamu has virtually assured himself of another lower division finish. If Shamu would spend a little bit less time on his golf game and a little more time preparing for these drafts, he might have a contender to show for it. His golf game stinks anyway. Sorry, Shamu, start psyching up for 1990.

Senators

Holding true to form, the Skipper has once again squandered an opportunity to pull his team into contention via the supplemental draft process. The fearsome foursome of Tom Gordon, Jim Abbott, Ed Whitson and Jim Eisenreich probably ranks up there with the best of my supplemental drafts, and that alone should tell you what sort of success I have had in the supplemental draft. I notice that Ed Whitson has managed to go 0 and 2 since supplemental draft day, and the other three are not exactly tearing up the league.

Blues

Although McBlunder had a commendable supplemental draft, he could have selected Babe Ruth, Sandy Koufax, Cy Young and Ty Cobb and it would have had roughly the same impact in the grand scheme of things. In other words, the Blues were beyond repair, and the supplemental draft was about as meaningful to McBlunder as a pair of cuff links would be to Shamu's wardrobe. Anyway, thanks for coming up from Kansas City to share in the fun.

Trip Update

Final plans and preparations are being made for the now-legendary Summer Trip. Those of us who can will leave Omaha at midafternoon on Thursday, the 20th, to journey to Kansas City for the Royals/Indians game that evening. McBlunder has offered to put all of us up at his house that night. His wife will stay at a Super 8 nearby. The following day, Friday, the 21st, we will meet at the airport for our flight to Chicago, which I believe leaves at approximately 1:00 p.m. Baby Trumpetfish has indicated that he is fagging out and won't be going on the trip, so a plane ticket is available for Possum or Magpie, if either of them can muster up the gumption to seek spousal permission. Begin making mental preparations for this monster occasion.

Enclosed are the supplemental draft record and some photographs from the supplemental draft. Also enclosed is the third in the series of Dewars profiles, this week featuring the boisterous, balding skipper of the Mudhens, "Sandjigger" Thielen.

Epilogue

Well, not much more to add, except to point out for you who haven't noticed that the Senators continue to be unfairly plagued by crippling injuries, rendering this otherwise first-rate ballclub a second-division squad. Of my present 25-man roster, no less than eight -- count 'em, eight -- have spent time on the disabled list. This includes both of my first basemen, my starting third baseman, and two of my three projected starting outfielders. And I could go on and on, and probably will in future editions of From the Bullpen and on the League Trip. Yet, in the face of these insurmountable odds, the Senators have avoided the basement, and will no doubt be moving up the ladder to pass the Cubs and Tigers in the near future. This, of course, says a lot about the tenacity and competitiveness of the Senators, and their wiley Skipper.

I guess I've droned on enough. Enjoy the photos, keep reading those box scores, and we'll see you all on the League Trip.

Skipper

1989 Supplemental Draft

Magpie attempts a scalp massage on Whitesot to try to stimulate some brainwave activity.

Skipper grills up a light snack for Shamu.

The kitchen chair groans as Shamu relaxes, while Sam politely takes his foot out of the potato chip sack.

Pipsqueak bows his head in shame as he is ridiculed for picking up lightly-regarded shortstop Felix Fermine.

Shamu feigns laughter to mask his inability to understand Possum's incessant intellectual quips.

McBlunder rifles through his 40 pages of crayon drawings, trying to appear knowledgeable about the draft.

Forced to choose between David Valle and Craig Biggio, WhiteSot slams down another Barleypop and prays for divine guidance.

Visibly disturbed by someone's crack about his "soft" physique, Sandjigger dips into the Lays bag for solace.

In accordance with tradition, Magpie begins the 1989 Supplemental Draft with a prayer for his gravely ill daughter.

Sun-bum Sandjigger tests the 480 pound weight capacity of the chaise lounge, as Possum, overcome by sunstroke, slumps into unconsciousness.

Shamu sparks a heated debate between Underbelly and Pipsqueak, as Underbelly has Shamu on his ninth hamburger, but Pipsqueak insists that he has reached double figures.

As the Supplemental Draft winds to an end and the patio begins to clear, Shamu unselfishly offers to help clean off the grill.

McBlunder jumps into the argument, reminding the others of the six Polish dogs which preceded the hamburgers.

Health/fitness guru Sandjigger orders up five more body-building franks.

DEWARS

JOHN "SANDJIGGER" THIELEN

Nationality: Egyptian

Religion: Mackerel Snapper

Vocation: Sales

Avocation: Writing haiku verse, taxidermy

Height: 5' 10"

Hair: Some

Bodyfat: 89%

Favorite Song: Lord, It's Hard to Be Humble When You're Perfect in Every Way

Favorite Activities: Working on basement shrine to himself, grooming his stuffed pheasant, putting
Wanda in heat by sunbathing in the buff in his backyard

Favorite TV Viewing: Videotaped home movies of himself

Last Date: April 27, 1976 (Senior Prom)

Favorite Scotch: Dewars