

FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of the
Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
1989 Season

Edition No. 7
September 13, 1989

Dear Fellow Owners/Managers:

As this issue of From the Bullpen goes to press, we have a September pennant race the likes of which has never been seen before in the Hot Stove League. The managers of the top five teams all have a legitimate shot at bringing home the highly coveted Cup this year, reaping financial reward, and earning the respect and admiration of his peers in the League. With a little over three weeks to go in the season, here is how the savvy old Skipper sizes things up:

Fourth Runner-Up: Tigers. Although WhiteSot has been intoxicated by success before (as well as by every brand of beer brewed in this hemisphere), he will not walk away with the Cup for a third consecutive year. Having in all candor picked a very mediocre team, WhiteSot cannot expect to do better than simply finish in the upper division. In fact, finishing ahead of any team other than the Blues is in itself a blessing for the Tigers. But for the fact that Robin Yount and HoJo are having career years and carrying the weight of the world around on their shoulders, the unimpressive Tigers would finish where they rightfully belong, below the Senators, Chiefs, Cubs, and even the Mudhens.

Third Runner-Up: Pirates. I would like to be able to say that Pipsqueak's squadron will be bringing home some bacon this year, but I fear that his relative inexperience as a League owner and manager will cost him a shot at finishing in the money. While the Pipster has some pretty salty dogs in his everyday lineup, headed up by drill sergeant Will Clark, his pitching staff is as suspect as Jigger's professed sexual preference. With a little luck, the Pirates could sneak into third by year's end, but a finish atop the heap appears unlikely.

Second Runner-Up: Reds. Sniffing a pennant within reach, Magpie reportedly went out and got a new flattop in an admirable effort to emulate his idol, Whitey Herzog. Unfortunately, while his friends and co-workers are still willing to call him the "White Rat," from all reports, Magpie's new "do" more closely resembles that of Buster Poindexter. And that's sort of fitting. Notwithstanding his unconventional new coif, or perhaps in spite of it, Magpie has set himself up as one of the favorites for a title. Oddsmakers say he will finish in the money, but behind Underbelly and Possum.

First Runner-Up: Red Sox. With his usual spate of Irish luck, McPossum has once again transformed a hapless pack of spineless squids into a pennant contending juggernaut. Who among us would have thought that the squad selected by Possum at the draft would be vying for a third Red Sox crown? On the other hand, who among us could have predicted McBlunder's untimely brain death at the supplemental draft, allowing McPossum to walk away with everything except for McBlunder's g-string? If Possum comes away with another crown, we must pay the devil his due. And then tar and feather him and run him out of the state on a rail. And then sell his wife and kid into slavery, burn a cross in his yard, and convert all of his assets into high-risk stock options. And then publish the truth about his sexual indiscretions with Roman Gabriel and Liberace's dwarf nephew. And then the rest of us can live our lives in peace and harmony.

1989 Champion: Braves. Yes, Virginia, there really is a Santa Claus. Who would have guessed that this small-minded blue collar icon from Lincoln had the managerial savvy and firepower to take a hapless team with a history of futility to the pinnacle of success? Of course the answer is none of us, which suggests that it might be well to have someone else check the heretofore unverified numbers being spewed out by Underbelly's artificially intelligent home computer. Not that Underbelly would intentionally deceive anyone, but it seems that the rest of us are being a bit naive in blindly accepting the idea that Underbelly's basic sense of honesty is impervious to attack from his well-known hunger for power and love of money. Remember, this is the fellow who lives by the credo that "There's no jam so big that a good, bald-faced lie can't get you out of it."

Despite Underbelly's total pessimism at his chances of finishing as Numero Uno, this writer sees 1989 as the Year of the Braves. Look for the Braves to revel in the spotlight for one short season, and then drop back down to the bottom of the pack where they belong.

League Tidbits

For the record, Sandjigger has on two different occasions conceded his foolhardy supplemental draft day wager that the Senators would spend the rest of 1989 sniffing the Mudhens' tailpipe. Now that the Senators have a few healthy bodies back in the lineup, they are poised to leap past the stagnant Mudhens at any time, perhaps even as you are digging this Bullpen out of the mailbox. And of course the Mudhens will finish well behind the Senators this year, as everyone predicted and expected.

Is it just my imagination, or has the bloated baron of the Cubs quieted down just a smidgen since his team quietly slipped into ninth place? Take heart, Shamu, although McBlunder's Blues have been waxing your wagon the past few weeks, it looks like your lead over the Blues will hold out and you will have escaped the cellar for another year. But there's always next year.

I've been looking for a top-notch collection lawyer to help me put the squeeze on a couple of deadbeats who owe me money, and the first person I thought of was WhiteSot. The trouble is, I thought of WhiteSot not only as a crack Omaha collection lawyer, but also as one of the primary deadbeats who won't come across with the clams he owes me for the Summer Trip. You would think that seven or eight phone calls to his business associates and family would be enough to humiliate WhiteSot into coming clean and squaring up with me, but I guess his bar tab at the Bottoms Up Lounge commands his top attention in the scheme of financial matters. In any event, I will expect to be reimbursed at least before embarking on next year's Summer Trip, which I will no doubt also be financing for a number of you slugs.

It's not that he doesn't have anything better to do, but our resident critic extraordinaire, Sandjigger, has spotted no fewer than ten misspellings in the point summaries received from Masterspeller. Don't feel bad, Underbelly, you've only had five months of the season to work the bugs out of your system. I guess you can continue to blame the misspellings on your user-hostile home computer, which you have evidently not yet mastered.

Not that this will come as a big shock to anyone, but several League members have commented that this year's version of the Blues may not only be the worst team in the five-year history of the Hot Stove League, but may be the worst team in any rotissierey league in the continental United States. We will leave it up to our master statistician, WhiteSot, to crank out some numbers at the end of the season, drawing whatever comparisons are reasonable and appropriate concerning this year's model of the Blues.

And not to continue rubbing it in your face, McBlunder, but one League wag has suggested that perhaps you had a side agreement with Mrs. McBlunder this year, requiring the Blues to be completely out of contention, and hence off your mind, no later than the Summer Trip. If this is true, you obviously did her one better: the Blues were out of contention from approximately the eighth round on draft day.

Closing

Not much more to add. Enjoy the final weeks of the season, keep reading those box scores, and pray fervently to your God or higher power that neither Possum nor WhiteSot will be sipping champagne from the Cup at the end of the year. May you rest in peace, Mr. Giamatti.

Your humble scribe,

Skipper

From the Bullpen
Edition No. 7
September 13, 1989
Page 4

DEWARS PROFILE

ROBERT "UNDERBELLY" HURLBUT

Sans Beer Goggles
When Sober

Body by Pillsbury

Age: Middle

IQ: Inversely proportional to length of manhood

Hair: Mustache and beard

Occupation: Professional Featherbedder and Union Bootlicker

Favorite Actor: Telly Svalas and Yul Brynner (tie)

Favorite Hobby: Ichthyology

Book Now Reading: I'm Okay, I'm Okay, I'm Okay

Proudest Moment: When Jim Bakker uncurled from the fetal position and walked
into the courtroom like a man

Life's Ambition: To set one foot in every country for about 5 minutes

Favorite Drink: Dewars on the rocks