

FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of the
Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
1990 Season

Edition No. 4
July 10, 1990

Fellow Owners/Managers:

We are now at the All-Star Break, the traditional mid-way point of the baseball season. At the break, the League standings are as follows:

Reds	7275
Chiefs	7247
Cubs	6976
Blues	6920
Red Sox	6913
Senators	6815
Tigers	6747
Pirates	6736
Mudhens	6600
Tribe	6587

Congratulations to Magpie for finishing the first half of the 1990 campaign atop the League standings. Unfortunately for you, we don't pay out money based on half a year, and there is a lot of baseball left standing between you and the prize money. So don't get too cocky yet.

ENCLOSURES

For your information, use and enjoyment, I have enclosed the following materials:

1. Dewars Profile: Bart Simpson-Magpie;
2. Updated rosters;
3. Player trade sheets for the last two trades;
4. Updated roster of owners and managers, including fax numbers;
5. Head-to-head match standings; and
6. Photographs.

THE POSSUM CONSPIRACY

Well, let's 'fess up, boys. Possum is on to us. He knows about the conspiracy. The weekly head-to-head competition brought the conspiracy out in the open, and now we must deal with it.

As Possum has long suspected, the other nine League owners and managers have in fact been conspiring against him in a continuing, collusive effort to prevent him from winning the League jewel, almost since the League was founded. We fared poorly in our efforts the first two years. As we must now disclose, the nine of us all agreed, in contravention of the spirit of competition and fundamental fairness upon which this League is grounded, as well as fundamental principles of democracy and capitalism, to refrain from making any player trades with Possum, whether that trade be good, bad or neutral. I'm ashamed to say that I was an integral part of this conspiracy. The rest of you should be ashamed, too. It's time to mend our fences. Now, when Possum calls you with a preposterous trade proposal, and, as is his custom, seeks to obtain your top player in exchange for one of his Ed Whitsons or Inky-Dinky Doos, suck it up and make that trade, no matter how devastating the effect on your team. It's the right thing to do.

THE MOLITOR/SHEFFIELD AFFAIR

For those of you who might have missed it, the straw that broke the back of the insidious conspiracy was the vote of the Rules Committee concerning the June 10-June 19 head-to-head competition between Possum and WhiteSot. The saga began when Possum exercised his injury replacement option by picking up Gary Sheffield at third base, dropping Paul Molitor. This was done on Tuesday of that week (June 19), before the points were calculated by Underbelly. However, Possum informed Underbelly that he wanted the selection to show up that day when the point totals were calculated.

Underbelly dutifully carried out Possum's command, and included the points of Gary Sheffield (354) in the point totals for June 19, 1990, giving Possum 549 points for the week, compared to 553 points for the Tigers. With Gary Sheffield on the Red Sox' roster, the Tigers bested the Red Sox for the week by a total of 4 points. The difference between Paul Molitor's point total (399) on June 19, 1990, and the point total of Gary Sheffield on that date was 45 points. Since they were both non-starters for the Red Sox on that date, the net difference was 11.25 points.

After finding out about the results of his head-to-head matchup with WhiteSot, the Possum's sinister mind figured out that the head-to-head matchup with the Tigers would have gone to the Red Sox if Paul Molitor's additional 11.25 (net) points had been included. Seizing upon this difference, the Possum adopted the stance that although he exercised his injury replacement on Tuesday, June 19, because Paul Molitor's point totals on that date were for games completed on Sunday or Monday, the higher point totals of Paul Molitor ought to be included in determining the winner of his head-to-head race with WhiteSot. You know the rest of the story. WhiteSot vigorously took issue with this contention of Possum, and the matter was put to a vote by the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee, without giving any consideration to the merits of the situation (in Possum's viewpoint), and only to further the conspiracy against Possum, voted in favor of WhiteSot on this disputed issue, awarding the substantial \$5 contest to WhiteSot.

Perhaps I am partly to blame for Possum's belief that a conspiracy exists against him. For, at one point in time, I actually stated to Possum that I thought his contention on Molitor/Sheffield had some merit. After listening to Possum's initial explanation of his position, and before hearing Mr. Objectivity's (WhiteSot) twenty-minute diatribe on the inequities of Possum's position, I actually, although mistakenly, felt as if Possum's position had a modicum of merit, and told him so. As usual, Possum twisted my words around in his own mind until he believed that all League members had accepted his position as gospel, prior to the conspiratorial act of the Rules Committee in ruling for WhiteSot. However, two points of clarification need to be made.

First of all, when I told Possum that his position might have some merit, I also told him that if I were ever to vote for him, it would only be because it was my impression that he picked up Sheffield in good faith and without an eye towards using the move to unfairly advantage himself in the weekly head-to-head competitions. Frankly, I told Possum that since he so seldom acts in good faith, I thought that this one showing of clean hands ought to be recognized and rewarded, to promote further acts of decency. Secondly, in believing that Possum's position had some merit, I assumed that he was planning to use Molitor's points as the benchmark in the following week's head-to-head competition with the Chiefs. In other words, I assumed that Possum did not plan to try to use Paul Molitor's higher point totals for the purpose of matching up against WhiteSot one week, and then with a wave of his magic wand, use Gary Sheffield's lower point totals for the purpose of calculating the increase in team points the following week for his head-to-head competition with the Chiefs. Well, I was wrong.

Possum wanted to have it both ways. For some inexplicable reason, he sees this as fair. I will leave it to Possum to try to explain this puzzling theory to the rest of you.

In any event, now that everything is said and done, the official ruling is that the Tigers bested the Red Sox, 553 to 549 in week No. 2 of our head-to-head competition. Possum was required to use the point totals of Gary Sheffield both for his head-to-head competition with WhiteSot, and the following week's competition with the Chiefs. The official ruling is that for purposes of invoking the injury replacement option, you must use the point totals for a new player as of the first time after the selection that point totals are calculated for that new player, regardless of when the last game was played by either of the traded players.

POSSUM TO SECEDE FROM LEAGUE?

With all the talk of conspiracy being bandied about, there have been numerous rumors about Possum and the Red Sox seceding from the Hot Stove League. In other words, because the other owners and managers won't knuckle under to Possum's laughable trade offers, he wants to pick up his ball and go home. Well, none of us want to see that happen. However, I can assure you that the only way Possum will leave this League is by being tossed out on his ear by the other members, and not by his own voluntary departure. Why, you ask? Because: 1) no other League in town will put up with Possum's unctuous tactics, and particularly, his repeated "bait and switch" trade proposals; 2) he has to have some legacy to leave to Max; 3) if he secedes, we'll erase his names on the Cup for 1985 and 1986, and replace them with the names of his moral equivalents, Ivan Boesky and Michael Milliken; 4) we are the most faithful clients this sleazy stockbroker will ever have; 5) he makes six figures a year, but this is the most important thing in his life; and, most importantly, 6) TRACY WON'T LET HIM QUIT.

Buckle up your chin strap, Possum, you are in for the long haul.

TALK OF THE TOWN IN TORONTO

As most of you are aware, Baby Trumpetfish and his wife went to Toronto for their 10th anniversary, and visited the Sky Dome for a couple of Blue Jays games. Coincident with their return, the following excerpt appeared in an issue of Sports Illustrated:

Draw your own conclusions. Baby Trumpetfish was unavailable for comment.

SUMMER TRIP

The First Annual Ernst Family Reunion trip to Arlington, Texas, July 6-8, was a smashing success. Present on the trip were Baby Trumpetfish and the entire Krause clan, McBlunder, McBlunder's loyal and long-time companion, Bob Lannin, Shamu, the old Skipper, and the executive secretary of the Omaha Senators, Cheryl. The flights on Southwest and American Airlines were prompt and pleasant, the accommodations at the beautiful Rodeway Inn in Arlington were superb (see accompanying letter), and the baseball games which we attended were, simply put, what it is all about.

To begin the trip, Shamu, Bob Lannin, Cheryl and I watched the Kansas City Royals defeat the New York Yankees on July 4 in Kansas City, after which we viewed a magnificent fireworks display in Royals Stadium. McBlunder passed on the baseball game and spent the evening setting off snakes and sparklers at the in-laws. The following morning we left for Texas.

We arrived in Dallas late in the afternoon on the 5th, after a series of touch-and-go landings by our pilots. After checking into Motel Hell in Arlington, a franchise of the Rodeway Inn chain, we proceeded to Arlington Stadium to watch the Rangers best the Baltimore Orioles. On Friday night, we saw the Rangers spank the Boston Red Sox. Finally, on Saturday night, we watched my Nolan Ryan overpower the Red Sox and Mike Boddicker. Sorry about that, McBlunder.

The baseball games were all very good, but we all experienced an interesting revelation after the three game stint in Arlington. At the first ballgame, as is customary, we drank ourselves silly. During the second game, we all drank our share, but tempered our per-inning intake just a bit. In the last game, we were virtually alcohol-free, although not by choice. Because of the large crowd, we were forced to sit in the centerfield bleachers, in close proximity to the dreaded family-no-alcohol section of the stands. The beer vendors wanted no part of our area, and after an initial pre-game brew,

we didn't see another vendor for the rest of the Saturday night game. After nine innings without a whiff of alcohol, we all began to wonder if our wives and significant others might be right. Maybe baseball is a boring game. Our solution? Don't get caught short next time.

It was painfully obvious in Dallas that we are all getting older, wiser, and more apathetic. Although there was plenty of talk about what we would do when we went to the Million Dollar Men's Club, the hottest stripper club in the country, we never even made it to the club. And, other than McBlunder's ill-fated attempt to seduce the Guatemalan coffee queen at Thursday night's ballgame, there was nary an attempt to take advantage of the City of Beautiful Women. The end is near.

Let the record now reflect that only McBlunder, Shamu and the Skipper have attended every summer trip that each was a member of the Hot Stove League. The rest of you namby-pamby fags have missed at least one year, either because of a feeble family excuse, such as Sandjigger's emergency baptism commitment, or because your wives just wouldn't let you go. At least WhiteSot, Possum and Pipsqueak were up front with the rest of us, letting us know right away that their spouses run the show and that this year they said no. Sandjigger, Magpie and Underbailout led us all along to believe that they would make the trip, and then came up with phony-baloney excuses at the last second to avoid having to drink and raise hell for four straight days.

Poor Magpie had another family emergency, preventing his participation in this year's outing. This poor guy. It's just one crisis after another. Next year he'll probably have to miss the trip because of the trial of his second cousin, the erstwhile skipper of the Exxon Valdez; or because an earthquake in Iraq destroyed the home of his sister-in-law; or because his aunt was crushed in the annual Road to Mecca. Our thoughts are with you during these times of personal tragedy, Magpie.

Sandjigger had no justifiable excuse for missing this year's trip. His sister gets married on Wednesday and he is the godfather for his nephew's baptism on Sunday, and he thinks that this is more important than the trip. Shape up and get your priorities in line, boy. We all missed your leadership in quaffing an average of 20 beers per day on the League trip.

Underbelly probably had the most ingenious excuse for missing the League trip. He caught a bug in Mexico last October, and he just can't shake it. Sure. While most people who catch the Mexican bug tend to have problems with severe diarrhea, Underbelly claims that his problems are at the other end of the spectrum. In other words, it takes a stick of dynamite to clear his system. Hope they can get you fixed up, buddy. Next year we'll reserve an extra seat (no pun intended) on the trip for your proctologist.

Since the planning of the League trip is traditionally passed from member to member each year, I nominate Pipsqueak, WhiteSot and Possum for League planners for the 1991 trip. I look forward to sneaking out to Rosenblatt for four innings of a game, and then rocketing to the Scorecard for a beer before sprinting home to make it through the door by 10 p.m. Should be a great trip.

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UPDATE ON SIDE BETS

As you all recall, several side bets were made at the initial League draft this year. Sandjigger and I have a \$50 bet on the highest League finish between our two teams. Put that one in the bank for the Senators. The other side bets were between WhiteSot and Baby Trumpetfish, \$20 each on the individual season point totals for Dawson (WhiteSot) against Dwight Smith (B.T.), and Moseby (WhiteSot) against Devereau (B.T.). Sorry, B.T. Things aren't looking good for you on this one.

PROMOTION FOR SANDJIGGER

Congratulations are in order for Sandjigger, recently promoted to Vice-President (in charge of leg-humping and bootlicking?) for First Data Resources. This is quite a promotion, as no more than half of all FDR employees (excluding part-time mailroom help) ever make it to Vice President or higher. This must have taken an extraordinary amount of back-slapping, flesh-pressing, and ass-kissing, Sandjigger. You are to be congratulated for your efforts. You're truly a hale fellow, well-met.

CLOSING

Well, that's about it. I'm still waiting in trembling anticipation of big, bad, Underbelly's much-publicized retort to the Bullpen. If you can ever get off the crapper long enough to put crayon to paper to write out some trite little ditty, I welcome it with open arms. Just don't fax it to my partners, I beg you.

Until the next issue of From the Bullpen, I remain,

Very truly yours,

Skipper

DEWARS PROFILE

Mitch "Magpie" Pirnie

Team: Omaha Reds

Prior League Finishes: Out of the big money

Nicknames: Magpie, Bart Simpson, Gums Yapping Plenty

Profession: Attorney

Affiliation: Brashear & Ginn

Areas of Specialty: 1) Franchising; 2) Filibusters; 3) Bootlicking Kermit

Favorite Work Activity: Talking

Favorite Leisure Activity: Running his chops

Most Distinguishing Feature: Flattop

Hobbies: Sucking up to Kermit, schmoozing, conspiring against Possum

Favorite Album: Talking Book (Stevie Wonder)

Favorite Song: I'm Walking (Yes, Indeed, and I'm Talking)

Favorite Singing Group: Talking Heads

Favorite Movie: Talking Tall

Favorite Mystery Series: Night (S)talker

Favorite Adventure Series: TalkTari

Favorite Expression: Talk loudly, and you won't need a big stick.

Least Favorite Expression: Talk is cheap.

Greatest Fear: Running out of family-based excuses to use in Hot Stove League activities.

Favorite Drink: Dewars on the rocks.