

FROM THE BULLPEN

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

Edition No. 5
July 30, 1990

"I'm in control here."

-Alexander Haig, March 1981
-Skipper, July 1990.

Okay, Underbelly, we enjoyed your cute little Rod Serling spoof. Have your fun, take a few jabs, but don't push your luck. Remember, I publish From the Bullpen. I'm in control here.

On a serious note, I very much enjoyed Underbelly's literary effort. Congratulations are in order. Not for the witty content of Blunderbelly's work, however, but because I only spotted ten mistakes in spelling and grammar. (See attached correction sheet.) You are making great strides in your development, Mastrespeliar. Soon you will have honed your skills sufficiently to obtain a job as a cub editor for the Fremont Sun.

This issue of From the Bullpen is a short one, primarily aimed at reminding you of some rapidly-approaching deadlines. Our ultimate deadline on trades is September 1, 1990. However, after midnight on August 1, 1990, each team is limited to one additional trade involving a maximum of three players. September 1 is also the deadline for invoking the injured player allowance. After September 1, you will no longer be able to pick up an available player to replace a present roster player on the disabled list.

Remember also that you must provide Underbelly with a list of your designated starters no later than September 1, 1990. If a written designation is not received by U-Belly by that date, the players on your team who are leading at each position on that date will be automatically designated as your starters. If you have any starters and reserves who are close in points on September 1, designate your starters or forever hold your peace.

Trade Talk

As you might expect at this time of the year, there has been a flurry of activity in the trade negotiation arena. As contending team owners attempt to shore up their squads for what promises to be a dogfight of a pennant stretch, and as certain team owners attempt to slow their spiraling descent towards the League basement (Shamu and McBlunder come to mind), offers, counteroffers and non-offers (Possum) have been passing through the telephone wires with the same alarming frequency as Sandjigger's hair loss.

Possum has been so busy trying to put deals together with Sandjigger, Shamu and Underbelly, and trying to queer every deal that other managers are attempting to negotiate with each other, that he completely missed the recent stock market downward "adjustment" (a stockbroker euphemism for a staggering loss). He heard about it a week later from Max, his precocious two-year-old. Hey, Possum, don't worry about us, your faithful Fund investors. It's more important that you pester your fellow managers into trade submission than for you to heed your fiduciary duty to we ignorant few who have placed our trust and money with the Fund.

Although there has been plenty of trade talk swirling around, I am not aware of any deals that have been consummated as From the Bullpen goes to press. The usual names are being tossed about: Ed Whitson for Roger Clemens, Ed Whitson for Dave Stieb, Ed Whitson for Bob Welch, Ed Whitson for Doug Drabek, Ed Whitson for Ramone Martinez, Pete Incaviglia for Darryl Strawberry, Pete Incaviglia for Barry Bonds, Pete Incaviglia for Kevin Mitchell, Pete Incaviglia for Rickie Henderson, Pete Incaviglia for Jose Canseco, Gene Larkin for Kirby Puckett, Gene Larkin for Barry Bonilla, Gene Larkin for Tony Gwynn, Gene Larkin for Willie McGee. No bites yet. Gosh, Possum, maybe it really is a conspiracy.

Down the Stretch

With about two months to go, 1990 is shaping up as the season with the tightest finish ever from 1st to 10th. It looks like the Chiefs and the Reds probably have the top two positions locked up, but the third money spot is up for grabs by anyone. Here's how the old Skipper sees things for the rest of this year:

1. Reds. Although his pitching staff is full of some real stinkers, Puckett, Bonilla, Sandberg and Fielder should carry the load the rest of the way for Magpie, as they have done all year.
2. Chiefs. Although they won't finish on top, if B.T. can restrain himself from making his annual trading blunder, Trammell, Henderson, Burks and Butler will lead the way to a nifty second place finish.

3. Senators. The mighty Senators are back where they belong, up near the winner's circle. Despite the continued devastation of this team by injuries, the savvy early-season drafting by the Skipper and his trading insight keep the Senators in contention.

4. Blues. Although they have been headed downward at a breakneck pace, the Blues will turn it back around with a strong final finish, if McBlunder can keep Possum at bay long enough for the trade deadline to pass.

5. Tribe. Yes, Underbelly, there really is a reason that you devote one-half of your waking hours and 40% of your disposable income to this League. With your dynamite outfield and a few well-considered trades, your squad should be in the upper division at year's end.

6. Tigers. Although this team continues to look dismal on paper, with Boggs heating up and Biggio starting to make some noise, it appears that the Tigers should be able to keep out of the bottom four.

7. Red Sox. Possum, you may think my prediction of 7th place for your team is degrading and unfair. It's not. With the butt-ugly outfield that you selected, together with the marginal remainder of your team (excluding Will Clark and Dave Stewart), you belong at the very bottom of the League. Only because of your incredible luck and because we all know you will pull off some last-second trade with McBlunder, Shamu or Underbelly, will you finish as high as 7th. Your reign of tyranny and terror is over.

8. Pirates. Sorry, Pipsqueak. What we thought was a good team at the beginning of the year is a lousy team at the end of the year. Be happy for League participants like Shamu and Sandjigger.

9. Cubs. What happened to the Cubs? After a magnificent first half of the season, they plummeted downwards faster than Underbelly's one-time investment in Bridges Investment Fund. At this point in the season, the 1990 Cubs look like a superannuated elephant looking for a graveyard in which to quietly die. Once again, Shamu's hopes and dreams of an upper-division finish and the respect of his fellow managers have been shattered. But don't despair, Shamu, at least you have your crackerjack golf game to fall back on.

10. Mudhens. Sorry, neighbor. The 1990 Mudhens are like you and your golf game: Long on talk but short on talent. Not only are you certain to lose our \$50 head-to-head bet, but your beloved Mudhens are likely to finish at the very bottom of the heap. Sure, you are a big shot VP at First Data Resources, but when it comes to something that really counts, like the Hot Stove League, you are a complete washout. READ MY LIPS: LAST PLACE.

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Trade Hotline

Possum asked me to remind all of you that one-stop shopping is available at the Possum Trade Center, open 24 hours a day, where "If you come here to trade, you'll leave with a handshake, a smile, and a fair deal." (Sorry, fellas, but this was a paid advertisement from the Possum. Unfortunately, From the Bullpen is not a publicly-funded institution.) To talk trade with Possum, call his toll free number, 1 (800) FAIR DEAL.

That's about all for this issue, gang. Keep those cards and letters coming.

The Skipper

"Why, Underbelly, you little dickens. Your Rod Serling schtick was so ... cute!"

Circa 2040: Determined to finally break 130 at Firethorn, Sandjigger carefully lines up his putt on No. 18.

CORRECTION PAGE: ROD SERLING PIECE

- Page 1, line 4: Should be a comma after Ernst.
- Page 1, line 8: Grocery "isles" should be "aisles."
- Page 1, line 13: "Jehovah Witness" should be "Jehovah's Witness."
- Page 2, third excerpt: Whip should be "wimp."
- Page 3, line 5: Should be a comma after the word "Dallas."
- Page 3, line 8: Should be a hyphen between the words "excuse" and "fest."
- Page 3, line 13: There is no such word as "unexcusable." The word is "in_excusable."
- Page 3, para. 2, line 3 : "Sister's kid" should be "brother's kid."
- Page 3, para. 3, line 1: "Who" should be "whom."
- Page 4 (caption beneath photograph of Serling): "Trite" and "little" mean essentially the same thing, as used here. Their use together was, well, "redundant."