

FROM THE BULLPEN

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"And after the 25th round he rested,
and he said, 'It is good.'"

Amigos:

Call it a feeling. Call it a hunch. Call it whatever you want. When the 1990 version of the Senators was drafted back on that now-storied 31st day of March, I had a sense deep down in my gut that this was a team that would forever be in the hunt, that would scratch and claw and do whatever was necessary to find a way to win. Other League members snickered and giggled, laughed and even guffawed, mostly behind the Skipper's back, musing to each other about how the Senators could once again be expected to finish in the lower echelon of the League, cosied in among the Mudhens, Blues and Cubs. You may recall that the much-maligned Senators were predicted to finish in a tie for last place with the hopelessly hapless Mudhens, distantly out of the money.

Don't you all look silly now? Here we are at season's end, awaiting only the announcement of post-season awards so that it may be determined just how much of your money the maverick owner of the Senators will take home this year. Exclusive of post-season awards, the final tally for 1990 looks like this:

Senators	13,527
Chiefs	13,393
Reds	13,168
Red Sox	13,115
Pirates	12,829
Tigers	12,710
Mudhens	12,697
Blues	12,558
Tribe	12,417
Cubs	12,192

With Bonds, Drabek and Alomar in the running for post-season award points, the Senators have been picked by most as the odds-on favorite to capture the League jewel. WhiteSot has gone as far as

to deliver the coveted Cup to my office, anticipating a Senatorial championship. But let's not be hasty. There are several scenarios which, if they came to pass, would find another team at the top of the heap when it's all over.

Take the Chiefs, for example. If Rickie Henderson should win the A.L. MVP award, and Eddie Murray the N.L. MVP, the 300-point boost which would be realized by Baby Trumpetfish would be enough to push the Chiefs past the Senators, even with Drabek winning the N.L. Cy Young award and Sandy Alomar, Jr. winning the A.L. Rookie of the Year award. For another example, take the Reds. If Cecil Fielder wins the A.L. MVP award, and Barry Bonilla or Ryne Sandberg win the N.L. MVP, and David Cone should win the N.L. Cy Young award, the Reds would have enough points to move into first. Not likely, but it could happen. And how about the Red Sox? Mathematically, they still have a shot. Of course, the Red Sox would have to sweep the post-season awards, which is highly unlikely; but let's not forget about the inaugural year of the Hot Stove League, when the Red Sox picked up 500 points in post-season awards, and skipped past the static Cubs, which picked up no post-season award points. With Dame Fortune constantly looking out for the League carpetbagger we call Possum, anything is possible. Let me go on record right now as promising that if Dave Stewart, Ed Whitson, Brett Butler and Brook Jacoby sweep the Cy Young and MVP awards to slime past the Senators, I will be giving serious thought to seceding from the Hot Stove League and taking up rotisserie league cricket.

Awards Ceremony

Although it won't necessarily be the Skipper to whom you will be paying tribute, I have taken it upon myself to offer to host a post-season awards party. The date is Sunday, November 11. The fun will begin with a late afternoon pizza and beer fest at my house or at Sandjigger's rumpus room, followed by an excursion to Aksarben to see the Omaha Racers' opening game of the 1990-91 CBA basketball season. I am working on obtaining tickets for the game, so please let me know right away if you will not be able to attend this League event. We will plan to start the outing at around 3:00 p.m. The basketball game starts at 7:05 p.m. Plan to be on board for a good time. Even you, Magpie.

Food for Thought

Baseball statistics and rankings are the basic diet of any Hot Stove League participant, and WhiteSot should be thanked for providing us with his delectable annual ranking of players by position, utilizing his highly-regarded "median" ranking system. Unfortunately, this system seems to be unfairly biased against someone like Shamu, who annually picks a pathetic team. As an example, out of the eight starting positions for every-day players, Shamu's Cubs had the 9th-ranked first baseman

(Galarraga), the 10th-ranked second baseman (Herr), the 10th-ranked shortstop (Weiss), and the 27th- (Bell), 29th- (A. Davis) and 30th- (Coleman) ranked outfielders. Only at third base (Gruber) and catcher (Tettleton) did Shamu manage not to stub his toe.

Enclosed for your reading enjoyment is my own ranking of all of the 160 every-day players who ended up on the ten team rosters at year's end. Take a look at the top ten players. One thing is painfully clear: We may know baseball, but we don't know our own system.

The top point-producing player, Barry Bonds (1422 points), was the 63rd overall pick in the draft. This means that he lasted until the 7th round. This means that when Shamu picked George Bell, Ozzie Smith, and Devon White during the first six rounds, he could have had Mr. Bonds. And how about you, Sandjigger? You could have had Bonds instead of Carney Lansford (865 points) in the 6th round. Masterspieler, you could have had Bonds instead of Joe Magrane (266 points) in the 4th round. I'm sure you both had your reasons.

It doesn't get any better. The second highest point producer, Bobby Bonilla (1401 points), lasted until the third pick of the 3rd round. The third highest point-getter, Ryne Sandberg (1386 points), lasted until the third pick of the 2nd round. Then it really gets ugly. Cecil Fielder, the No. 4 point man (1366), was the 157th player selected overall. No. 5, Lenny Dykstra (1312), lasted all the way through the initial draft (250 players), until the supplemental draft. Eddie Murray, sixth in points at 1303, lasted until the 13th round. Brett Butler (1295) made it into the 8th round. No. 8 point-getter, Rickie Henderson (1294), was the only player in the final top ten to have been selected in the 1st round (6th overall, by the Chiefs). Nos. 9 and 10, Willie McGee (1293) and Ron Gant (1283), were also supplemental round selections.

In summary, out of the top ten overall point producers, one was picked in the 1st round of the draft, one was picked in the 2nd round, one in the 4th round, one in the 7th, one in the 8th, one in the 13th, one in the 16th, and three in the supplemental draft. Let's face it, boys. We choked.

Now let's take a look at how our 1st round selections did this year:

<u>Draft</u>			<u>Rank Among</u>	
<u>No.</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Player Name</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>160 Batters</u>
1	Tigers	Wade Boggs	1167	35
2	Red Sox	Will Clark	1259	14
3	Reds	Kirby Puckett	1186	27
4	Tribe	Jose Canseco	1161	36
5	Pirates	Ruben Sierra	1180	29
6	Chiefs	Rickie Henderson	1294	8

7	Mudhens	Robin Yount	1214	21
8	Senators	Don Mattingly	652	Discarded
9	Cubs	Mike Greenwell	1149	40
10	Blues	Cal Ripken	1173	32

The Bargain Basement Boys

In addition to the supplemental selections and Cecil Fielder and Eddie Murray, there were a number of other players who proved to be real bargains at the draft position selected. Feast your eyes on these:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Draft Position</u>	<u>Rank Among 160 Batters</u>
Rafael Palmeiro	228	22
Dave Parker	167	24
Ken Griffey, Jr.	84	17
Matt Williams	71	16
Ivan Calderon	90	26
Roberto Kelly	123	33
Mark Grace	115	34
Chris Sabo	175	45
Brook Jacoby	189	46
Hubie Brooks	143	52
Tony Phillips	217	53
Jerry Brown	156	57

Great Expectations

A number of players who were selected relatively high in the draft, and had great things expected of them, fell far short of the mark. The following is a sampling (any resemblance to the entire Cubs team is not purely a coincidence):

<u>Name</u>	<u>Draft Position</u>	<u>Rank Among 160 Batters</u>
Wade Boggs	1	35

Jose Canseco	4	36
Kirby Puckett	3	27
Ruben Sierra	5	29
Eric Davis	12	51
George Bell	19	55
Steve Sax	22	70
Gary Gaetti	24	75
Bo Jackson	20	89
Devon White	49	125
Ozzie Smith	39	88

What If?

A lot of you are probably wondering, "What if I had stuck with my original drafted team, and not screwed myself up in the supplemental draft and coughed up on myself during the trade wars?" Good question. Here's the answer:

1.	Chiefs	12,955
2.	Reds	12,387
3.	Pirates	12,329
4.	Cubs	12,310
5.	Red Sox	12,243
6.	Senators	12,187
7.	Blues	12,085
8.	Tigers	11,955
9.	Mudhens	11,898
10.	Tribe	11,875

There are a couple of lessons to be learned from this. The Chiefs had a good thing going, but not the good sense to know it. To begin with, B.T. really crapped in his mess kit at the supplemental draft. In the 1st round, B.T. picked up Neal Heaton (256 points) as a starting pitcher, when he could have had Bud Black (366), Scott Sanderson (365), John Burkette (366), Greg Hibbard (401), Maledo Perez (340), or David Wells (394). In the 2nd round, B.T. picked up Kevin Gross, who finished the year with 210 points, and dished off Scott Garrelts, who finished with 272 points, and was subsequently picked up by Magpie as an injury replacement pick. In the 3rd round of the supplemental draft, B.T. picked up Kal Daniels (1124) and dished off Mike Devereaux (689), which admittedly was a good move. Then in the 4th round, B.T. picked up Ron Gant, who ended up with 1283 points (but was

traded to the Senators), but dished off the wrong Smith brother, Lonnie. Lonnie the dumpee finished with 910 points, while Dwight the keeper finished with 545 points.

As if the supplemental draft wasn't disaster enough, B.T. compounded his woes by trading off: (1) his top-ranked outfielder, Brett Butler (1295); (2) Ron Gant, the 10th-ranked overall player with 1283 points; and (3) his highly-ranked (although back-up) shortstop (Jay Bell) and third baseman (Howard Johnson), all the while getting very little in return for these plums. Next year, B.T., practice some restraint.

Shamu, you should be able to take some solace from the fact that you actually did pick a pretty good team at the initial draft, ultimately the fourth best club at 12,310. Unhappily for you, however, you whizzed down both your short little legs during the supplemental draft. In the 1st round, you picked up a slug of a pitcher named Howell, who finished with 148 points, and discarded Jack Morris, who finished with 351 points. Ouch! In the 2nd round you picked up a real buzzsaw of a pitcher, Pete Harnisch (244), and followed up that stellar selection by picking budding superstar catcher Pat Borders (659) in the 3rd round. You shrewdly passed in the 4th round of the supplemental draft. Looking back, you could have picked up your entire starting outfield (Candy Maldonado, 1195; Kal Daniels, 1124; Ron Gant, 1283) in the last three rounds of the supplemental draft. As they say, hindsight is 20-20.

Shamu and B.T. were not the only League managers who made unwise decisions during the supplemental draft, however. Possum spit up on himself when he dumped off Rob Deer in the 2nd round (801), and picked up Gene Larkin (747). Pipsqueak pulled a real McBlunder when he picked up Todd Benzinger in round 2 of the supplemental draft, who finished with 632 points, and dished off Jack Clark (who finished with 819). Likewise, the Pirates lost ground when they picked up Barry Jones (354), and dished off Doug Harvey (389). Magpie didn't lose any ground by picking up Joe Orsulak for Brian Downing, but then he didn't get a lot for his money, either. They both finished with 805 points. Without question, the biggest boner of the supplemental draft was committed by my bombastic neighbor, when he dumped off Dave Winfield (1003) and picked up dazzling Dante Bichette, who finished with 632 points. How do you spell choke, Sandjigger?

That's enough fun for now. Mark your calendars for Sunday, November 11, and be prepared for some fun. See you then.

Skipper