

FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of
The Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
1991 Season

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Colleagues:

The mid-way point of the Hot Stove League season is now here, and I find this truth to be self-evident: Barring a continuation of the rash of injuries which have unfairly and disproportionately plagued my boys, the Senators will be in the hunt as we head down the stretch. I find this truth also to be self-evident: The Cubs are heading back down to the sewer.

At the halfway mark, the standings look like this:

1.	Reds	7285
2.	Tigers	7083
3.	Cubs	6928
4.	Chiefs	6744
5.	Senators	6706
6.	Blues	6590
7.	Red Sox	6523
8.	Tribe	6489
9.	Pirates	6423
10.	Mudhens	6380

	<u>Name of Team</u>	<u>Current Point Totals</u>	<u>Last Week's Points</u>	<u>Last Week's Totals</u>
1.	Reds	7285	566 (3)	6719 (1)
2.	Tigers	7083	639 (1)	6444 (2)
3.	Cubs	6928	538 (6)	6390 (3)
4.	Chiefs	6744	638 (2)	6116 (5)
5.	Senators	6706	545 (4)	6161 (4)
6.	Blues	6590	541 (5)	6049 (6)
7.	Red Sox	6523	531 (8)	5992 (8)
8.	Tribe	6489	450 (9)	6039 (7)
9.	Pirates	6423	534 (7)	5889 (10)
10.	Mudhens	6380	406 (10)	5974 (9)

Things are not looking good for the Mudhens, as you may have noticed. Last week the hapless Hens of Mud managed to peck out only 406 points. Chickenfeed, to put it nicely. The Hindu-man has been cooler (14 points last week) than a box of dry ice. Jamie Navarro is the ace of the mighty Mud staff. As the poem says, the outlook isn't brilliant for the Mudville Nine today. All that back slapping and flesh-pressing may get the Jiggerman a lot of credit card business, but it sure hasn't translated into success in the one phase of his meaningless existence which really counts.

At the half-way mark, the best and worst of the pitching squads are as follows:

Best:	Tigers	1533.7
Worst:	Mudhens	1195.3

Similarly, the best and worst hitting teams are:

Best:	Reds	5883
Worst:	Pirates	5129.75

At the half-way point, the top ten batters are:

	<u>Batter</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>This Week's Totals</u>	<u>Last Week's Points</u>
1.	Ruben Sierra	(Cubs)	781	37
2. (tie)	Tony Gwynn	(Senators)	748	45
3.	Cal Ripken	(Reds)	748	47
4.	Frank Thomas	(Red Sox)	728	49
5.	Jose Canseco	(Chiefs)	722	111 (wow!)
6.	Cecil Fielder	(Tigers)	718	30
7.	Paul Molitar	(Cubs)	715	29
8.	Ryne Sandberg	(Senators)	707	87 (yes)
9.	Wally Joyner	(Senators)	705	55
10.	Joe Carter	(Blues)	698	47

Here are the top ten pitchers half-way through the year:

	<u>Pitcher</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>This Week's Totals</u>	<u>Last Week's Points</u>
1.	Tom Glavine	(Senators)	397	38.5
2.	Scott Erickson	(Blues)	389.7	0
3.	Ramone Martinez	(Chiefs)	375.2	50.7
4.	Roger Clemens	(Tigers)	370.7	51
5.	Dennis Martinez	(Tigers)	356	39
6.	Jack McDowell	(Pirates)	322.6	26.4
7.	Lee Smith	(Senators)	321.1	36.1
8.	Rob Dibble	(Mudhens)	317	13.9
9.	Jimmy Key	(Cubs)	316	5.3
10.	Brian Harvey	(Red Sox)	301	31

Now here is a look at the top players at every position, and the top reserve at each spot.

Catcher:	M. Tettleton	584
	C. Biggio	500
	B. Santiago	467
Reserve:	T. Pená	444
1st Base:	F. Thomas	738
	C. Fielder	718
	P. Molitar	715
Reserve:	W. Clark	624
2nd Base:	R. Sandberg	707
	J. Franco	637
	J. Samuel	612
Reserve:	H. Reynolds	523
SS:	C. Ripken	748
	O. Smith	641
	H. Johnson	630
Reserve:	G. Gagne	384
3rd Base:	W. Boggs	620
	T. Zeille	547
	T. Pendleton	540

Reserve:	E. Martinez	505
Outfield:	R. Sierra	781
	T. Gwynn	748
	J. Canseco	722
	J. Carter	698
	D. White	695
	D. Henderson	679
Reserve:	T. Raines	592
Pitchers:	T. Glavine	397
	S. Erickson	389.7
	R. Martinez	375.2
	R. Clemens	370.7
	J. McDowell	322.6
Reserve:	M. Moore	203.1
Relief:	L. Smith	321
	R. Dibble	317
	B. Harvey	301
Reserve:	B. Thigpen	280

Trade Talk

Although it does not yet show up in the weekly point totals, it is my understanding that WhiteSot and Shamu have forged a questionable trade. According to Shamu, he has traded the core of his pitching staff, Dennis Martinez, and Fat Boy Hrbek to WhiteSot for Paul Molitar and Bill (ugh) Gullickson. According to Shamu, Fat Boy has been limping around plenty on his bad wheel lately, and WhiteSot hopes that the Twins will place him on the disabled list so that he can call up the Krukmeister from his injury pool. Isn't it amazing how some people will do almost anything to circumvent the rules and regulations of the Hot Stove League? Plainly, WhiteSot knows that the spirit, if not the written letter, of the injury pool provision is to mitigate the harm to a team when one of its players takes a lump on the grape and goes out on the disabled list. It was not intended to be all things to all people. Time and again we have emphasized that the injury pool is not to be used to give a team a windfall. Time and again we have stated that one may not trade for another team's injured player in order to benefit his own team, by invoking the injury pool provision. Now, blinded by his second place standing and the alluring point total of the Krukmeister, WhiteSot has sacrificed all remaining vestiges of dignity, trustworthiness,

honor and self-respect by trading for a player whom he expects to go on the disabled list, and in so doing has shaken the very foundations of the Hot Stove League. The once respected and revered former Commissioner has fallen prey to the powerful aphrodisiac of fame, power and personal recognition, and has done what others only think of doing.

Having lightened my heavy load, let's move on.

Let's take a gander at how each team is looking as we head into the second half of this year's campaign.

REDS

Magpie's first place standing and healthy lead at the half-way point are deceiving. His top three outfielders, Calderon, Chili Davis and Devon White, are playing so far over their heads that they'll need airbags to cushion their falls when they come down to reality. Each day Magpie says a little prayer that Jack Clark or Jessie Barfield break a leg, an arm or get hit by a truck, so he can call up the red-hot Mr. Gonzalez from his injury pool. Cal Ripken is on a pace to score 1500 points this year, which would beat his previous best by a 'ho' bunch. But will he be able to keep it up? Doubtful. Look for the Reds to be in the hunt come September, but don't start measuring Magpie for a crown just yet.

TIGERS

Hmm. Is this team really as good as it's played in the first half of the year, and particularly, the last few weeks? Nope. WhiteSot has a bunch of hot Tigers, some overachieving pitchers, and relative good health to thank for his second place position. But can Tettleton, Fielder and Fryman maintain the pace? Probably not. When the real Tigers start playing down to their abilities, WhiteSot's Tigers will follow suit and undoubtedly fold up like a \$7.99 lawn chair. Look for an upper division finish from the Tigers, but don't hoist that schooner of victory grog just yet, WhiteSot.

CUBS

Shamu's Cubs have managed to plummet from first to third in just a few short weeks. Query: Will the Chubs bounce back, or will they continue their breakneck descent towards the toilet? The obvious answer is the latter. Several Cubs are having career years at this point. Jimmy Key, Harold Baines, Paul O'Neill, Ozzie Smith and

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Robbie Thompson are just a few who come to mind. When the bubble begins to burst for these hot Cubs, Shamu may as well strap an anvil around his neck and prepare for another of his patented plunges. His trip from the penthouse to the outhouse will be swift and sure. It's one of the undeniable laws of nature.

CHIEFS

What gives with the Chiefs? This team is up and down more than their hefty manager's blood pressure. One week they stink, the next week they're world-beaters. Must be some sort of chemical imbalance. In any event, now that Canseco is heating up, the Chiefs may actually have a shot at the crown, although it would take more than a little bit of luck and a lot of good health to see this team through to the title. Mazel tov, me amigo.

SENATORS

The Senators definitely have the look and smell of champions. If only they can avoid a second half of back breaking injuries, look for the defending Champs to hang another pennant on the rafters. But for the injuries to Lance Parrish, Wally Joyner, Jeff King, Junior Felix, and of course, Dave Justice, the Senators would likely be looking down at the rest of the teams from atop the League standings. The winning combination is there. All we need is good health.

BLUES

The Blues continue to fight their natural inclination to slide towards the cellar. The acquisition of Scott Erickson at the supplemental draft was a godsend for McBlunder; unfortunately, his arm woes have relegated him to the disabled list for a short stint. Beyond McBlunder's good fortune in cherry-picking Erickson, he has witnessed the apparent coming of age of long-time potential great Danny Tartabull. If Danny and Joe Carter are able to keep up their first half pace over the long haul, and if Ken Griffey, Jr. heats up down the stretch, and if McBlunder is able to parlay one of his prize third basemen into some pitching help, and if pigs sprout wings, the Blues may be able to at last finish in the upper division of the Hot Stove League. But that's a lot of "and if's." Don't get your hopes up, McBlunder. Enjoy what little honor you now have.

RED SOX

Even with all of his trickery, deceit, chicanery, underhandedness, tomfoolery, monkeyshines, mendaciousness, hanky-panky and skulduggery, the Possum is proving to be powerless to maneuver his leaky Red Sox craft into the flagship position. Too many old and washed up outfielders, too few fresh horses to carry the load through the hot summer.

If the Possum finds his team's present seventh place standing to be unenjoyable, imagine his state of mind when his aging squad creeps nearer more the League bowels, as the dog days of August take their toll. Even his slimy selection of Greg Vaughn cannot rescue his superannuated outfield from a season of collective mediocrity. Absent a blockbuster trade involving Frank Thomas, Will Clark, Brian Harvey and/or Bobby Thigpen, this team is destined to languish in the lower division all season. Couldn't happen to an oilier guy.

TRIBE

Watch out for this team! Underbelly has quietly and coyly crafted himself a contender. While the Tribe presently is lodged in eighth place, and is not exactly coming off of a firecracker week (450 points), Underbelly finally has a team that can make some waves. If McGriff and Butler stay hot, if Matt Williams and George Bell get hot, and if Underbelly can trade off one of his surplus second basemen for some pitching or outfield help, this team could move a long way. Remember, the savvy Underbelly has two of his pitchers presently on the disabled list, and two pitchers anxiously waiting in his injury pool to take their place. When Underbelly makes this move, the Tribe should instantly leap past several other teams into immediate contention. Unless Possum swoops in like the vulture he is and picks U-belly's bones clean.

PIRATES

Not much this team can do this year. Crappy team. A great year for the Pirates would be staying out of the cellar. If Bonilla gets back in the outfield and heats up, and if the Silent Assassin can trade for any other first basemen, and if Larkin stays hot, the Pirates could be respectable. But if you want to look ahead to next year, Pipsqueak, I recommend it.

MUDHENS

Alas and alack. The Mudhens appear to be firmly entrenched in last place. Only if the Henderson brothers heat up and stay hot, and if Kevin Mitchell stays healthy, and if his mediocre infield turns everything up a notch, does this team have a prayer for a finish with any measure of respectability. The Sandjigger's pitching staff may be one of the worst in

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Hot Stove League history, with perennial All Star Jamie Navarro leading the vaunted pitching corps. Things are going so bad for Dave Stewart, now that he's on the Mudhen staff, that he's reverted to his old habit of trolling for transvestites. But for the stabilizing presence of superstar reliever Rob Dibble, this staff would really be in trouble. Write this one off to experience, Sandjigger, and start building momentum for 1992.

I may be foolish to put my neck out on the line like this, but this is how I see the final standings:

1. Reds
2. Senators
3. Chiefs
4. Tribe
5. Tigers
6. Blues
7. Pirates
8. Red Sox
9. Cubs
10. Mudhens

No offense, Shamu, but I've got history on my side.

Well, that should about do it for this edition of *From the Bullpen*. Good luck to each of you in the second half of a spirited campaign.

Eternally yours,

Skipper