



FROM THE BULLPEN

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The Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
1992 Season

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Comrades:

A warm welcome back to each of the seven brave souls that participated in our spectacular whirlwind baseball trip to the tri-cities. To the rest of you spineless worms who call yourselves men -- and more to the point, baseball fans -- you undoubtedly missed the trip of a lifetime. Three great ballparks, great weather, great tickets, great beer and Brats, great (as in large) hangovers, and -- great Scott -- a great turnout! Only three unnamed slugs (you know who you are) wimped out by mindlessly obeying their spouses or employer; seven fun-loving, free-spirited, lovers-of-life made the epic sojourn.

The highlights of the trip were myriad, certainly too many to recount. But here's a sampling:

- Catching the oozy Possum in a bold-faced, bald-headed lie about having to go to California for business, and summarily approving his ouster from the Hot Stove League, pending his groveling plea for readmittance and sufficient restitution to the Hot Stove League managers.
- The twelve-hour yak ride from Toronto's finest establishment, Hotel Punjab, to Cleveland.
- Shamu's repugnant use of the English language.
- The aromatic Hertz van.
- The towering home runs by Cess, Rob and Mickey at Tiger Stadium.
- Skipper's heartless and complete fleecing of his helpless, alcohol-savaged brother-in-law. (Paul O'Neill for two Cy Young Award winners -- Dwight Gooden and Orel Hershisier. Somebody commence the conservatorship proceedings, please.)

- The perfect fit of Magpie's trousers on Jiggerman.
- Filling up at The Beer Store with LaBlatts to fill our LaBladders.
- Jigger's ego-shattering rebuffing at the Flats.
- Barking at gorillas.
- Breakfast at Lennie's.
- WhiteSot's surprising bitterness at the absence of green seats in Tiger Stadium.
- The astonishing hospitality of Possum's pending replacement in the Hot Stove League, Brother Rob in Detroit.
- B.T.'s expulsion of a litter of angry muskrats.
- The Kevin Costner sighting (or, How a Pair of Goofy-Looking Eyeglasses Turned a 237-pound Man into a Teen Idol).
- Jigger's unabashed love of cats and cat fur.
- Shamu coming out of the closet with his heretofore hidden desire to wear an earring and rattail (the "Shamu-Gone-Bad" and "David Wells" looks).
- The unparalleled warmth of the border inspector at our fateful crossing into Windsor for the Canadian ballet.
- Getting Flattened by the Tubes at the Flats.
- The blossoming of the now-fast friendship of McBlunder and B.T.
- Tim Burkes' summary shattering of Sandjigger's self-perpetuated myth of high school athletic prowess.
- How we woefully missed the chatterbox Silent Assassin (whose incessant talk was absent but laudably replaced by the Magpie -- who, as Shamu pointed out, can "flat out talk").
- Noriega.

- Skipper's remarkable self-control while monitoring of everyone's alcohol intake (the facial contortions were merely to make a point).
- Sandjigger's tearful revelation that he is under a "lot of pressure," but he still loves his life.
- B.T.'s hysterical threat to go over Niagara Falls with or without a barrel unless someone took action to muffle Magpie.
- Jigger's face dipping in diesel oil (give that boy a turban).
- Shamu's naive and childlike delight at the uncountable number of painted ladies around the Hotel Punjab (and McBlunder's delight at all the painted boys nearby).
- The heartwarming -- and frankly, unexpected -- sight of Jigger paddling his own canoe.
- The septette singing tribute to the unavoidably absent Underbelly: "WE LOVE OUR LIFE!"

Like everything else, the highlights of this year's trip will grow and mature through the years. Whatever else might be said, though, there will never be another Cleveland.

NEW STANDINGS

Sadly, the Reds of defending HSL champ and Hall of Fame gabfestmeister Magpie -- buoyed by several shutouts and a record-setting team pitching performance of 502.4 points -- have surged into the lead after our fifth two-week session. The totals after ten weeks (with the most recent two-week totals in parentheses:

Reds	(1149.4)	5317.7
Skipjacks	(1120.6)	5282.9
Cubs	(938.4)	5122.2
Senators	(1095.9)	5093.7
Tigers	(1094.6)	5050.7
Red Sox	(900.3)	4683.1
Blues	(975.9)	4673.9
Tribe	(936.3)	4611.0
Pirates	(1030.4)	4403.7

Chiefs (775.4) 4345.6

If you think it was painful being on *this* year's trip with Magpie after he had *one* League win under his belt, imagine how insufferable he will be and how incessantly his braggadocio will flow on next year's trip. I get a headache and stomachache just thinking about it. Let's hope for long and suffering visits on the disabled list for Saberhagen, Bonds, and each and every other member of the Reds roster.

WHO'S HOT

Here are the top point scorers for the past two-week period for starting hitters and pitchers:

Hitters

1.	Puckett	158
2.	Sandberg	151
3.	Carter	144
4.	Canseco	136
5.	Bonilla	136
6.	McGwire	131
7.	Winfield	130
8.	Mack	129
9.	Knoblauch	126
10.	Daulton	125

Pitchers

1.	Tomlin	125.4
2.	Mussina	118.3
3.	Nagy	97.9
4.	Smiley	93.1
5.	Fernandez	89.5
6.	Hurst	87.3
7.	Glavine	85.5
8.	McDowell	85.2
9.	Belcher	82.5
10.	Maddux	79.0

WHO'S NOT

Here are the low scorers (among starters) for hitters and pitchers for the past two weeks:

Hitters

1.	Williams (Matt)	20
2.	Gagne	28
3.	Alomar	31
4.	Gruber	35
5.	Borders	44
6.	Zeile	46
7.	Nokes	48
8.	Sheffield (not unexpectedly)	49
9.	Raines	51
10.	Kelly	54

Pitchers

1.	Harvey	-9.0
2.	Martinez (Ramone)	-9.0
3.	Greene	0
4.	Osborne	7.4
5.	Stieb	7.5
6.	DeLeon	8.5
7.	Cone	9.5
8.	Abbott	14.5
9.	Moore	15.9
10.	Tewksberry	24.5

TOP DOGS

The following is a list of the top ten hitters and pitchers in the Hot Stove League for the entire season to date:

Hitters

1.	Puckett	630
2.	Bonds	577
3.	McGwire	564
4. (tie)	Mack	560
5.	Gant	560
6.	Kruk ¹	552
7.	Sierra	543
8.	Van Slyke	537
9.	McGriff	528
10.	Knoblauch	522

Pitchers

1.	Clemens	453.9
2.	Nagy	392.9
3.	Glavine	387.9
4.	Brown	362.4
5.	Guzman	350.3
6.	Cone	348.3
7.	Mussina	323.8
8.	Smoltz	323.4
9.	McDowell	322.0
10.	Sutcliffe	316.0

MISCELLANEOUS

Magpie's two-week total of 1149.4 was the second highest two-week total for the year, bested only by the Cubs' two-week total of 1222.7 from May 4-17. At the other end of the spectrum, the Chiefs' two-week total of 775.4 was the second lowest two-week team total of the year, topped (bottomed?) only by the Chiefs' earlier anemic output of 773.5 during the inaugural two-week session. The performance of the Chiefs continues to move in

¹Unfortunately for poor old Hillbilly John, the sage Magpie has not yet found a place for him in the Reds' starting lineup, despite the fact that he continues to out-perform the Reds starting first baseman, Crimedog McGriff (528 points). Possum has spent the entire HSL season bitching and moaning about his unhappy dilemma of having both McGwire and Fielder at first base, but it looks like Magpie is the king of the lost coin flip.

the opposite direction of his burgeoning weight (237 according to Rob's scale). The Reds' pitching total of 502.4 for the past two weeks was the highest pitching output of the year, besting the Cubs' total of 480.7 during the May 4-17 session.

NOSTALGIA

Our visit to Detroit brought back fond memories of a Tiger favorite from years ago, Dandy Don Mossi. "Ears" to you, Don!

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Don "The Sphinx" Mossi

Don's Numbers

EPILOGUE

Point totals are enclosed. Check yours carefully for mistakes. Underbelly is trying hard, but he isn't perfect yet.

It was a great trip. It is a great life. Go in peace. Look for the promised next issue of the "Jiggernaut."

Skipper