



FROM THE BULLPEN

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The Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
1993 Season

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Welcome to the new year! 1993 is finally upon us, we can now all put the flukish 1992 HSL season out of our minds, and forget that Itchy defied the odds and finished at the top of the heap.

WINTER MEETING

Thanks to Itchy and Bitchy (short for Bride of Itchy) for hosting our 1992 winter meeting at their lovely newlywed nest. Although attendance was less than ideal¹, the six of us that were in attendance enjoyed several helpings each of Itchy's famous Skipjack Chili 'N' Cheese, which warmed us for several days. Festivities included the official passing of the Cup to Itchy, with Skipper filling in for the absent defending champion, Magpie; the presentation of a special "My Favorite Players" award to Itchy, which Underbelly was clever enough to design; and the coveted "Ears to You in '92" Don Mossi portrait and plaque, which will hang forever in the basement shrine of the Itchmeister.

For those of you who were not able to make it to the winter meeting, you will be pleased to know that we have voted to entirely revamp the League scoring system for 1993.

A quorum being present, WhiteSot submitted the proposal that we relieve Underbelly of his arduous task of calculating League point totals and correctly spelling player names, and adopt the Bill James scoring system by expanding our League by two teams and entering our League into the Bill James system. After a thorough discussion and analysis, the motion was unanimously approved, with League members voting as follows:

¹Underbelly was forced to miss because of an emergency pitch game at the railroad. The Silent Assassin couldn't go because Underbelly couldn't go. Magpie had another grave family illness. McBlunder could not secure a kitchen pass from the boss.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Vote</u>
WhiteSot	Aye.
Skipper	Sounds fair -- Aye.
Possum	Just give me a few more minutes to think about it -- A conditional ² aye.
BabyTrumpetfish	Ay-yi-yi-yi-yi.
Itchy	I will win under <i>any</i> system -- Aye.
Shamu	More chili? Aye!

So it's final. Next year, on a one-year season trial basis, we will expand to 12 teams and hook up to the Bill James system. WhiteSot assures us that he and Magpie will have no advantage whatsoever simply because they have been in another Bill James league with the exact same scoring system for the past four years. WhiteSot will distribute materials well in advance of Draft Day to explain the differences in the Bill James system.

THE DRAFT

Speaking of Draft Day, with Opening Day scheduled for April 5, 1993, I propose that the best day of the entire year -- the HSL Draft -- be scheduled for Saturday, March 27, 1993. **Please let me know ASAP if anyone has a conflict with this date.** The usual rules and customs will apply: The Draft will take place in the Gaines Mullen War Room; B.T. will bring the grub; Shamu will eat the chow; Possum will hem and haw and stall on every round of the Draft; Itchy will be interrupted by several phone calls from his impatient spouse; after the second round, Underbelly will shout out, "I hate my team!"; and in the end, it will be good.

NEW MEMBERS

With our decision to expand our League to twelve members, candidates for this blessing were discussed at the winter meeting. Criteria and qualifying factors for the prospective new managers were reviewed:

- Integrity (but don't worry, Possum, the Grandfather Clause applies to you)
- Must wear pants in family (Itchy, you too are protected by the Grandfather Clause)
- Enthusiasm
- Baseball knowledge

²Conditional on Possum benefitting from the change.

- High ideals (Grandfather Clause, Possum)
- Willingness to contribute to League
- Independence and financial wherewithal to participate in League functions
- Anticipated life expectancy of at least 35 additional years
- Thick skin
- Susceptibility to foolish nickname
- Lots of free time on hands
- Ability to spell (yes, Underbelly -- The Clause)
- Willingness to sit by Magpie on League trips

After a thorough discussion of the above criteria, I proffered the names of Michael Morris and Jim Buser (another lawyer) as prospective League members. Both Mike and Jim have been contacted, and have expressed a fervent desire to participate in the League for the rest of their living days, and a willingness to submit to a rigorous screening of their backgrounds and qualifications. Both have been informed that they will be accepted as candidate-members for 1993, with the understanding that if either of them should actually win the League this year, they will be expelled from the League forthwith and without further explanation.

Plan to meet the two rookies at the March 27 Draft, and please make them feel welcome. Mike and Jim will submit their team names to me in advance of the Draft, and their nicknames will be selected later on in the year. I propose to submit a list of ten monikers for each new manager, and to have their nicknames picked by popular vote.

MONEY MATTERS

At the winter meeting, Itchy was bold enough to point out that he has not yet received payment of the entry fee of \$100 from two persons. As pointed out in the October 15, 1992 issue of *From the Bullpen*, Shamu, WhiteSot, Possum, McBlunder and Pipsqueak were to each pay \$100 to Itchy. Two of you pikers have not yet done so. You will not be singled out for ridicule this issue, but if Itchy is not paid in full by Draft Day, the next issue of *From the Bullpen* will not be as kind.

In addition, WhiteSot has asked that each League member provide him with payment of the amount of \$25 as our deposit to participate in the Bill James system in 1993.

Several of us made payment to WhiteSot at the winter meeting, but the four of you who were not present and the Possum need to provide WhiteSot with your check for \$25 immediately. Fail not under penalty of expulsion from the League.

THE TRIP

And now for a few thoughts on my favorite topic, the HSL summer Trip. Last year's junket to Detroit/Toronto/Cleveland was probably the best yet, but we may be able to top it in 1993 with a West Coast swing to California. After thorough consultation with WhiteSot, last year's tour director, we submit the following proposal for the 1993 Trip:

Depart Omaha - Thursday, August 5, 1993 (early a.m.)

Royals v. Angels at Anaheim	Thursday, August 5, 1993, 1:05 p.m.
Rockies v. Padres at Jack Murphy Stadium (a double dipper)	Friday, August 6, 1993
Reds v. Dodgers at Chavez Ravine	Saturday, August 7, 1993, 7:05 p.m.
Reds v. Dodgers at Chavez Ravine	Sunday, August 7, 1993, 1:05 p.m.
Return to Omaha -	Sunday evening, August 7, 1993

WOW! I have goose bumps just thinking about it.

Please give this proposal your immediate attention and consideration, and plan to respond affirmatively at the Draft. Start building up your marital capital **now**, to draw upon when it will be so desperately needed during the dog days of August.

OPENING DAY

Opening Day for 1993 is Monday, April 5, 1993. Bow your heads in prayer. Two thoughts. First, is anybody interested in a weekend junket to Miami to see the first major league game ever for the Florida Marlins? History will be made when the Marlins play host to the Los Angeles Dodgers on Monday afternoon, April 5, 1993, at 1:35 p.m. -- that's right, on Opening Day! I am thinking that a weekend trip, departing on Saturday and returning on Monday evening, may be a must. Is anyone else interested in being part of baseball history?

Alternatively, for the first time in several years, the Kansas City Royals host a game on Opening Day, against the Boston Red Sox at 1:35 p.m. If we don't go to Miami for Opening Day, what about a day trip to Kansas City to see the new look of the Royals? If anyone is interested, let me know.

Lastly, but certainly not leastly, the Colorado Rockies have their first home game on Friday, April 9, 1993, hosting the Montreal Expos in an afternoon contest. B.T. and I both plan to be at Mile High Stadium on the 9th, and possibly also on the 10th and 11th. Who

else will be part of history with us? Who among you call yourselves real men and fans? This weekend will also be a chance for you to set foot in B.T.'s glorious mountaintop cabin, The Eagle's Nest. A more heavenly weekend there could never be. Keep it in mind, and let B.T. or me know if there's any interest in joining our ranks.

Time to close out this issue of *From the Bullpen*. Keep the faith, and prepare for another great year of baseball in the Hot Stove League. See you in April.

Truly yours,

Skipper

P.S. PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU CAN'T MAKE IT FOR THE DRAFT ON SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 1993.