



FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of
The Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
1993 Season

Edition No. 5
March 30, 1993

Brethren:

The 1993 Hot Stove League Draft is history, and so -- in effect -- is the season for many of you. Hearty congratulations to those of you who picked contenders, and heartfelt condolences to those of you who will be vying for a cellar spot.

Although I had considered foregoing my somewhat presumptuous evaluation of the Draft, the hue and cry of the masses was too fervent to ignore. As such, by popular demand, I once again present Skipper's considered analysis of the 1993 Draft:

Skipjacks

Strength:	Overall balance. Solid starters at each position.
Weakness:	itching is a big question mark.
Savviest Pick:	Frank Thomas in the 1st round (but what a no-brainer).
Biggest Blunder:	Chili Davis as his multi-position player (like Itchie's one-liners, Chili is old and overused).
Comments:	Itchie's biggest obstacle this year will be trying to find time to keep up with the box scores while keeping Coleman Vincent in clean diapers and Wife of Itchie happy.
Predicted Order of Finish:	4th

Senators

Strength:	Outfield (six solid players).
Weakness:	Middle infield (Ozzie is one year older; Sax is Sax).
Savviest Pick:	Ken Hill in the 8th (the rest of you snoozed while Skipper cruised).
Biggest Blunder:	Not picking Tettleton in the 2nd round (a major deviation from Skipper's game plan).
Comments:	If Barry Bonds' teammates don't toss him in the Bay with cement overshoes, Skipper likes his chances for '93.
Predicted Order of Finish:	2nd

Reds

Strength:	Middle infield (Fryman and Alomar will be a tough double-play combination to beat).
Weakness:	Starting pitching (this curious combination of old age and inexperience will cause Magpie to tear his fur out).
Savviest Pick:	Tom Henke in the 10th (damn, that hurt).
Biggest Blunder:	Rafael Palmeiro in the 3rd (in typical Magpie fashion, premature).
Comments:	The combination of his years of experience with the Bill James scoring format, and the devotion of 10 to 20 hours per week to the Hot Stove League as his law practice founders, will make Magpie difficult to beat in 1993.
Predicted Order	

of Finish: 1st

Cubs

Strength: Infield starters (not counting 3rd base).

Weakness: Infield depth (pray for good health, Shamu).

Savviest Pick: Lenny Dykstra in the 8th (if he avoids driving with a snootful and running into walls).

Biggest Blunder: Jose Rijo in the 4th round (Latin America lunatics are best drafted in the lower rounds).

Comments: With two Rockies and a Marlin on his roster, Shamu demonstrates that he is in favor of expansion in more areas than just his burgeoning waistline.

Predicted Order of Finish: 3rd

Tigers

Strength: Infield.

Weakness: Everywhere else.

Savviest Pick: Bret Saberhagen in the 11th (it's an odd-numbered year, remember?).

Biggest Blunder: Danny Tartabull in the 5th round (WhiteSot has a soft spot for whining malingerers with fat contracts).

Comments: For someone who spent 300 hours in preparation for the Draft, WhiteSot did a good imitation of someone who didn't. After starting things off with a bang in the first four rounds with Baerga, Tettleton, Martinez and Bell, things went downhill in a big hurry. WhiteSot will have to

employ some fancy footwork to escape the second division of the League in '93.

Predicted Order
of Finish: 9th.

Red Sox

Strength: Double-play duo of Ripken and Sandberg.

Weakness: Starting right-handers, first base and catcher.

Savviest Pick: Cal Ripken in the 1st (my kingdom for a shortstop).

Biggest Blunder: Tim Belcher in the 8th (might have been a little early, Possum, like 15 rounds early).

Comments: Even the Prince of Darkness will have difficulty piloting this unseaworthy craft into the Port of Riches. Too many things will have to go just right for the '93 Red Sox to finish in the money.

Predicted Order
of Finish: 8th.

Blues

Strength: Starting right-handers (Clemens, McDowell and Appier are a tough trio to beat).

Weakness: Infield (yeesh!)

Savviest Pick: Bip Roberts in the 3rd (to fill one gaping hole in an infield full of gaping holes).

Biggest Blunder: Tony Gwynn in the 7th (you can have him, I don't want him, he's too fat for me).

Comments: For the second straight Draft, McBlunder did himself proud. The 1993 Blues, while in no danger of having their name

affixed to The Cup, should fare reasonably well and vie for an upper division berth.

Predicted Order
of Finish: 5th.

Tribe

Strength: Right-handed pitching (Maddux, Cone and Smoltz).

Weakness: The soft underbelly of this team is the middle infield, with Whitaker and Gagne (or is it Gag me?)

Savviest Pick: Mike Devereaux in the 6th (brings back warm feelings for me).

Biggest Blunder: Taking Rheel Cormier as his starting leftie (he's not the rheel thing yet).

Comments: Poor Underbelly. Divested of his score-keeping duties, and still unable to master the fine art of spelling, he must sit quietly by in 1993 and watch his lowly Tribe scrap with the League rookies to avoid another doormat finish.

Predicted Order
of Finish: 10th

Pirates

Strength: Hard to find one, but to keep Piker's spirits up, let's say catcher and first base.

Weakness: Outfield (but if Piker were to get in a good Triple A rotisserie league, look out).

Savviest Pick: Still looking.

Biggest Blunder: Wade Boggs in the 6th (put a fork in him).

Comments: It is apparent that Piker has spent more time dodging bill collectors than honing up for the '93 Draft. Absent some underhanded trading tomfoolery with his pal, Underbelly, the Piker is looking at another finish near the bottom of the heap.

Predicted Order of Finish: 11th.

Chiefs

Strength: Outfield (a solid 5 out of 6. Sorry, Dante.)

Weakness: Middle infield (with a jockey at shortstop and the former Mayor of Denver at second base, things are looking grim)

Savviest Pick: Doug Drabek in the 3rd (look for a big year in the Dome).

Biggest Blunder: Angel Cordero in the 5th (in the 5th? Must have been a minor stroke.)

Comments: Although BabyTrumpetfish picked a team that might best be characterized as "questionable" (I'm being kind), with the new League format and its emphasis on money-based transactions, B.T. is anxious to start shoveling shekels toward a championship.

Predicted Order of Finish: 7th.

Bronx Bombers

Strength: Outfield (a solid starting corps).

Weakness: Pitching staff (at best, one would call this staff "suspect").

Savviest Pick: B.J. Surhoff in the 9th (between 3rd base and D.H., B.J. should play in 155 to 160 games).

Biggest Blunder: Doug Jones in the 3rd (did we forget that this man was playing Triple A in 1991?).

Comments: Although Clank has a few bright spots to watch during the 1993 season, absent a minor miracle, the Bronx Bombers are likely to settle into the cellar early on in the season, and stay there for the duration of the campaign. But hey, what are rookies for?

Predicted Order of Finish: 12th.

Redbirds

Strength: Outfield (if they stay healthy, Henderson, Puckett and Justice could put up some big numbers).

Weakness: A flaccid infield (with the exception of Will the Thrill).

Savviest Pick: Rickey Henderson in the 4th (the self-acclaimed "Greatest of All Time" may finally get it in gear during his final contract year).

Biggest Blunder: Jeff Blauser at shortstop in the 7th (if he plays 120 games, it will be a miracle).

Comments: Boxcar picked a crackerjack team for his first year in the Hot Stove League. While there is little danger that he will finish in the money (sorry, B.T.), he should be pushing hard for a spot in the upper division by season's end.

Predicted Order of Finish: 6th.

RECAP

This is how the Skipper sees it in 1993:

1st Reds (the proverbial Kiss of Death, I hope)

2nd	Senators (am I being too modest?)
3rd	Cubs (or 12th, I can't decide)
4th	Skipjacks (but don't bet on it)
5th	Blues (for McBlunder, this is like winning it all)
6th	Redbirds (a good beginning)
7th	Chiefs ("last will be first" is only in the Bible, B.T.)
8th	Red Sox (a good place for Possum)
9th	Tigers (ouch - how the mighty have fallen)
10th	Tribe (let's hear it again: WAIT TILL NEXT YEAR!)
11th	Pirates (see what happens to Pikers?)
12th	Bronx Bombers (ah, rookies are great)

I realize that it is considered blasphemy in some camps to rank the selections of a rookie ahead of longtime League members and former champions WhiteSot and Possum, but hey, as Underbelly might say, "I calls 'em as I sees 'em."

NEW NICKNAMES

As announced at the Draft, the new nicknames for Jim Buser and Mike Morris are Boxcar and Clank, respectively. Don't ask why, just accept it. Of course, these are subject to change in the future if either of our new members should distinguish themselves on a League trip or at a League function.

And so, the following is a revised list of the official League nicknames of the owners and managers of the Hot Stove League:

Rick Drews	WhiteSot
Chuck Sinclair	Shamu
Ted Bridges	Possum
Dave Ernst	Skipper
Scott Krause	BabyTrumpetfish
Bob Hurlbut	Underbelly
Jon Blongewicz	Stretch McBlunder
Dennis Bontrager	Piker
Mitch Pirnie	Magpie
John Thielen	Itchie Flukemeister
Mike Morris	Clank
Jim Buser	Boxcar

Once again, let me admonish you that *From the Bullpen* cannot endorse any future attempts to modify the Skipper's nickname, and any attempts to do so will meet with vigorous resistance.

SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT

As you know, we have agreed that we will hold a supplemental Draft in lieu of the free agency process described in the 1993 Rulebook. Since the free agency process begins on April 18, 1993, on that evening we will tentatively plan to participate in a telephone conference with all League members participating. During that conference, we will each be allowed to select up to three new team members from the available free agent pool, in draft fashion, with the last place team drafting first and the first place team drafting last. Once the free agent draft has been accomplished, the results will be reported to the League and the changes made on our individual team rosters. These changes will reportedly not take effect until on or about April 25, 1993. After that date, free agent selections/purchases will be available to each manager on a first-come, first-served basis. Prior to April 25, the only way to obtain a free agent will be through our April 18, 1993 draft.

Please plan to be available to participate in the telephone conference on the evening of April 18, 1993. Let's tentatively plan on beginning the conference at 8:00 p.m.

AVAILABILITY OF STATISTICS

For the initial fee which you have paid, you will each receive a weekly summary of statistics for your team, and the League standings, by mail on Thursday. These Thursday mailings will include statistics for games played through Sunday of the past week. If you wish to receive daily statistics via telefax, you may do that by contacting Stats, Inc. (telephone number 708-676-3322) and providing your credit card number. It is my understanding that a daily fax summary will cost \$20 per month for five days a week, and \$25 per month for seven-day service. Alternatively, if you are computer-literate (that rules you out, Underbelly), and wish to go "on-line," you may do this by filling out the 1993 on-line registration form which is included in the packet of materials that you received in the mail.

OPENING DAY

The second holiest of days on the HSL calendar (after Draft Day) is April 5, 1993. On that day, B.T. and I will have our first official brat and beer of the year at Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami, where we will see the Opening Day game between the Florida Marlins and the Los Angeles Dodgers. If there are any special prayer requests for players which any of you have on these two teams, they should be communicated to B.T. or the Skipper no later than Thursday, April 1, 1993.

Good luck to all in 1993, and --

From the Bullpen
Edition No. 5
March 30, 1993
Page 10

Let the Games Begin!

Skipper