



FROM THE BULLPEN

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Eastern Nebraska Division
1993 Season

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Fellow Baseball Aficionados:

Well, boys, the first week of the season is in the can, and the standings are, in many respects, startling. At the top of the heap, occupying unknown territory, is our beloved Underbelly. That's right. The mighty Spielmeister is in **FURST PLASE!** Just exactly where you want to be for the supplemental draft.

Although the odds of U-belly staying in first place for the long haul are about the same as Itchie ever making it to another League function, his hopes are nevertheless sky-high. And here is my pledge to the pilot of the once-lowly Tribe. If the Tribe finishes the year atop the League standings, we will replace his current nickname with a more suitable moniker: *Overbelly*. A little something to work for.

Enough talk. Let's take a look at the standings after one week:

1.	Tribe	394
2.	Reds	341
3. (tie)	Cubs	337
	Tigers	337
5.	Lincoln Chiefs	322
6.	Bronx Bombers	316
7.	Pirates	304
8.	Red Sox	284
9.	Redbirds	275
10.	Senators	271
11.	Skipjacks	263
12.	Blues	230

Oh, how the mighty have fallen. Just last season, the cagey Itchie experienced his crowning glory with his first Hot Stove League championship after many years of falling short. Now, suddenly saddled with family responsibilities, his lowly Skipjacks occupy the

very basement of the West Division, and eleventh place overall. A sign of things to come, it seems.

SON OF ITCHIE

Speaking of family responsibilities, congratulations to Itchie and Anne on the birth of their son, Zachary*, on Sunday, April 4, 1993. Fittingly, little Zack had his opening day one day before baseball's Opening Day. With his dark complexion and little conehead, one has to wonder if Vince Coleman and/or David Cone were in town last June, but Itchie isn't saying. In any event, kudos to Anne for her good work. And in retrospect, 36 hours of labor was probably nothing compared to the time and effort that Itchie puts in preparing for the Hot Stove League Draft, eh?

POSSUM FOUND A LITTLE LAMB, HIS FLEECE AS WHITE AS SNOW

Although it was just a matter of time, Possum was unusually early in administering his first official trade fleecing of the year. In a fit of panic, with Edgar Martinez on the DL and Willie Greene in Indianapolis, WhiteSot placed an ill-fated phone call to Possum and traded off the Happy Hillbilly, John Kruk, to the Red Sox for backup third baseman Leo Gomez. The Krukmeister, WhiteSot's utility player, has been of course the hottest of a very hot Phillies team, and is gathering in points for the Possum by the basketful. Gomez, on the other hand, is not. Boxcar and Clank, beware. The Possum has had his first taste of blood in 1993, and you may be next.

LEAGUE REPORTS

By now you have all received the first week's League reports from Bill James. Pretty impressive. Although the report has divided our group into two divisions of six teams each, our final standings will be determined on overall points, not placement within your division. For those of you that spotted the flagrant misspelling of the Lincoln "Cheifs," rest assured that Underbelly is *not yet* working for the Bill James system.

FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY DEPARTMENT

Representing the Eastern Nebraska Hot Stove League, BabyTrumpetfish and I were proud to be present at the first-ever Florida Marlins game, and to be joined by Underbelly for the first-ever home game of the Colorado Rockies. On Monday, April 5, 1993, B.T. and I watched the neophyte Marlins put the wood to Tommy LaSorda and his artful Dodgers.

*Named for former Brooklyn Dodger Zack "Buck" Wheat, no doubt.

We saw Charlie Hough throw the first-ever Marlins pitch for a strike (so maybe it was a foot or so inside; the umpire was caught up in the frenzy). Skipper saw the first-ever hit by a Marlins player. (Why didn't B.T. see that same first hit? You'll have to ask him.) And perhaps the most memorable moment of all, we saw the Yankee Clipper throw out the first ball.

Personally speaking, the Marlins game was an unforgettable experience. It was a carnival atmosphere, with anxious fans hoarding souvenirs and soaking in the flavor of the first game. And, sitting in the midst of 44,000 baseball fans named Ira was in itself an eye-opener.

On Friday, April 9, 1993, the happy trio of B.T., Underbelly and I watched the Colorado Rockies gain their first win by pounding the Montreal Expos into submission. What a day! The festivities started with the National Anthem by Dan Fogelberg (B.T. was moved to tears), and the first Rockies batter (Eric Young) started things off with a bang by bashing a tater over the left field wall. The first of many, many home runs to be hit to left field in Mile High Stadium, I assure you. The joy escalated when El Gato Grande, the Rockies' and Senators' beloved first baseman, cracked another tater over the left field wall in a later inning. Wow!

Now that opening week 1993 is behind us, several of us are already planning next year's Opening Day trip. We plan to usher in 1994 with a visit to the Rangers' new ballpark in Arlington. Make your reservations now.

THE TRIP

With the season underway, it won't be long before we join forces for the 1993 HSL trip to Los Angeles and San Diego, August 5-8. If anybody has any ideas about securing 9 or 10 tickets together at Chez Ravine and Jack Murphy Stadium, please let us know.

EASY MONEY

In my last issue of *From the Bullpen*, I failed to report on a couple of side bets which surfaced in the afterglow of our 1993 Draft. After gurgling down a dozen ales which markedly impaired his judgment, B.T. proposed the following side bets, to which the Skipper quickly agreed:

1. That the Chiefs will finish ahead of the Senators (\$100).
2. That the neophyte Redbirds will finish ahead of the Senators (\$100).

3. That the ace of the Chiefs staff, Doug Drabek, will finish with more points than the ace of the Senators staff, Dennis Martinez (\$20).
4. That the second pitcher on the Chiefs staff, Andy Benes, will out-perform the second pitcher on the Senators staff, Ken Hill (\$20).
5. That the Chiefs will not finish in the bottom division (again) (\$20).

I need not remind anyone about how B.T. fared with last year's side bets.

SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT

On April 15, 1993, we participated in the Supplemental Draft via telephone conference hookup between the tri cities. Enclosed is a roster of the Supplemental Draft picks. A couple of observations:

1. McBlunder did *not* know what he was doing (what's new?).
2. Itchie had his best Supplemental Draft ever (in absentia).
3. Possum was apparently in the market for wretched right-handed pitching.
4. B.T. really helped himself with Ed Sprague, Al Leiter and Pedro Astacio (could he possibly have made three worse picks?).
5. U-belly proved that there was not much to take in this year's Supplemental Draft.

PLEDGE CLASS OF '93 - KUDOS

I would be remiss if I did not make mention of the fact that our two League pledges for 1993, Boxcar and Clank, have managed to avoid the basement for at least the first week of the season. After one full week, the Omaha Redbirds managed a 4th place position in the East Division (9th overall) and the Omaha Bronx Bombers placed themselves in 5th in the West Division (6th overall). It may not last long, but enjoy it while you can.

ENCLOSURES

For your reading enjoyment, I enclose a hodgepodge of goodies. Have a ball.

See you next issue.

Skipper