



FROM THE BULLPEN

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GENTLEMEN, RE-START YOUR ENGINES!

The second half of the 1993 Hot Stove League campaign is underway, and it looks like we are in for a whale of a pennant race. Four teams (Chiefs, Senators, Skipjacks and Reds) are within 200 points of each other, and several other teams are re-tooling for a crack at the top spot. While it appeared just a short time ago that the cocksure Chiefs might be poised to run away with the race, several insiders have suggested that the Chiefs are in for a rocky road as the point limitations begin to have an impact. One League wag commented that B.T.'s family and friends had better don splatter-shields as the big squeeze begins. While the tater-blasting brutes on the Chiefs squad have flexed their muscles to the tune of 154 home runs in the first half of the season, they will cease to have meaning as soon as they slug 56 more (bringing the team to the limit of 210 "goners"). One can almost hear a faint (but loudening) sound of popping and squeezing as the angry jaws of the vise apply pressure to the massive sphere which sits upon B.T.'s slumping shoulders.

But enough fun for now. Let's look at how everyone performed during the week ending July 11, 1993. The totals were eye-catching:

1.	Lincoln Chiefs	454	
2.	Omaha Skipjacks	444	(second best for the year)
3.	Omaha Senators	420	(ho-hum)
4.	Boston Red Sox	403	
5.	Sin City Reds	377	
6.	Lincoln Colemans	343	
7. (tie)	Detroit Tigers	343	
8.	Omaha Redbirds	338	
9.	Lincoln Cubs	329	
10.	Kansas City Blues	324	
11.	Omaha Bronx Bombers	323	
12.	Lincoln Pirates	244	

With the way things are going, it takes a 375-point week just to stay even with the pack.

TRADE TALK

The phone lines have been buzzing with trade proposals, as League managers attempt to re-tool their squads to avoid the point limitations and to shape up for the run to autumn. Itchie recently consummated a trade with Magpie, giving up John Burkett for Orlando Merced and (who?) Omar Vizquel. O-O. While this trade doesn't look good on paper for the Itchmeister, it may be of substantial benefit in the long run, as long as Orlando continues his magic. Possum made a trade with Clank, giving up Eric Karros and Ellis Burks to obtain Marquis Grissom. So far, Marquis has refused to suck it up and play ball for his new owner, but it figures to be a savvy move for the Possum in the long run.

I nearly had a deal with Boxcar to obtain Kirby Puckett for Pete Harnisch and Darryl Kile, but my meddling brother-in-law stepped in and convinced the impressionable pilot of the Redbirds that he was getting the short end of the stick on this one. The next thing I know, Boxcar is insisting on Pete Harnisch, Steve Finley, David Cone and Paul Molitor for the Puckster. That, amigos, is what you call overreacting. I don't know how, I don't know when, but B.T. will pay dearly for queering my transaction with Boxcar.

McBlunder has announced that he is taking no calls for trade proposals, unless the trade is sanctioned, through sworn affidavit, as a reasonable trade by a plurality of League members.

No-Pay continues to be ineligible to conduct any League transactions, due to his financial inability to pay the \$3 in back charges on his BJFB account. Rumors persist that No-Pay's Pirates will be bailed out of their financial quagmire by a minority Japanese investor, who plans to rename the team the Nippon Bacon Brawlers. Insiders suggest that if an infusion of capital is not forthcoming to remove the Pirates from Transactions Suspended status, No-Pay's ouster from the League is imminent. Ironic, considering that two short years ago No-Pay was leading the charge for the summary eviction of our own beloved Possum from the HSL.

NO-PAY II?

Congratulations are in order to No-Pay and his spouse on the birth of their second boy, purportedly named Max Shannon. Sounds like either a new line of hair care products, or a crossbreeding of former cardinals Dal Maxville and Mike Shannon. Reportedly, Bryan Hospital in Lincoln has suspended the Bontragers from any further births there until their account is brought current.

TRIP UPDATE

We have now secured transportation for the upcoming trip to California, as well as hotel accommodations for the final night of our trip (the lovely HomeBoy Suites in scenic east-central L.A.). We are ready to roll!

Yours in the Brotherhood of Baseball --

Skipper