



# FROM THE BULLPEN

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Eastern Nebraska Division  
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Brethren:

## OPENING DAY

In the Bible, it says "*To Every Thing A Season,*" and so it is with baseball and our hallowed Opening Day. In the Hot Stove League, on Opening Day all things are possible. Your 23rd round draft choice might win 21 games. Your back-up third baseman might knock in 98 RBIs and turn into an All Star starter. The Lincoln Pirates might even have a chance to win it all. Ah, Opening Day!

However, not everyone in the Hot Stove League had a dreamy Opening Day. Case in point: B.T. As B.T. and I spent a fine Easter evening together in Denver, we watched as his ace pitcher, Jose Rijo (2nd Round, remember?), was roughed up by the Cardinals. Despite this, B.T. remained cheery, as he reminded himself that his '94 team was built on the premise of big comeback years from Canseco, Eric Davis, and most importantly, Darryl Strawberry. You can understand, then, B.T.'s chagrin as the T.V. flashed across the bottom the ominous message that Darryl Strawberry had been missing since early Easter morning.

Let it suffice to say that B.T. was less than pleased about his touted "Comeback Player of the Year." B.T.'s comment that "I hope he turns up encased in a cement overcoat" may have been a bit of a knee-jerk reaction, however. Surely he did not mean it.

Nice pick, B.T.

With Rijo's negative output to start the season, and the demise and fall of Strawboo, it appears that B.T.'s dream of a wire-to-wire championship season have been dashed. A wire-to-wire stay in the HSL cellar is certainly not out of the question, however,

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

B.T. and I ventured over to the under-construction Coors Field for an Easter Day visit to check on the progress. We are happy to report that the newest Green Cathedral is well underway, and will be a beautiful tribute to the National Pastime. Located at 20th and Blake Streets in the northwest sector of downtown Denver, Coors Field typifies the trend toward the return to urban parks. With restaurants and pubs springing up all around in anticipation of its inaugural '95 season, Coors Field will definitely be a suitable place for an HSL Trip in '95 or '96.

## MILE HIGH FAREWELL

B.T. and I witnessed the last baseball Opening Day in Mile High Stadium, as the Rockies, plagued again by inferior pitching, fell to the reigning National League champs, the Philadelphia Phillies, 12 to 6. As we ventured to Mile High for the game, the temperature was a pleasant 60°. By the 5th inning, it was snowing to beat the band. Under these less than favorable conditions, we witnessed auspicious beginnings by the Big Cat (Galarraga) and Ellis Burks, who hit a towering blast into the cheap seats. Both of these players, it should be noted, are on the Tigers '94 squad. A harbinger of the season, or a flukish coincidence? We shall see.

## AROUND THE HORN

As this issue of *FTB* goes to press, we are only four days into the season, and already there is much to discuss. A few of the highlights:

- Curby has managed to accumulate 900+ feet of minor league home runs (Carlos Delgado).
- Big Guy's 3rd round pick, Rod "The Caveman" Beck, is already down for the count, leaving the Tigers with the crackerjack relief tandem of Duane Ward and Derek Lilliquist.
- Iron Man Gwynn, the star right fielder for the Skipjacks, has confused April with September, and is taking the month off. Itchie need not worry, however, since he has proven commodity Raul Mondesi backing up Tony in left.
- And speaking of Itchie's troubles, was that his back-up third baseman who was demoted to the minors (Craig Paquette)? Sorry about that hot tip, Itchie.

- A fine beginning for the Tribe's Kevin Tapani. Who was it that was shouting about what a great pick he was?
- While we are on the subject of the Tribe, too bad about Shane Mack's career-ending injury, and the carping that Dave Justice is already doing.
- Was Joe Carter really ever hurt this year, or did I just dream that?
- Ryan Klesko, Ryan Klesko, Ryan Klesko. (If only I can stay in last place until the first free agent draft.)

### **FREE AGENT DRAFT**

Sorry about the short notice, but our first free agent draft will take place on **Wednesday, April 13, 1994**, beginning at 7:00 p.m. As we did last year, those who can will congregate at Gaines Mullen in Omaha, and at a selected site in Lincoln where we will hook up via the magic of the telephone with each other and with McBlunder. At that time, we will draft free agents for three rounds, going from worst to first, and our draft selections will then be submitted to Bill James. After this initial three-round free agent draft, each manager will be on his own for future free agent drafts.

Please plan to be available on the 13th for the free agent draft at 7:00 p.m., and study up.

In closing, let me just say this: Everything is going according to plan for the '94 Senators. Robin Ventura and Jeff Bagwell are on their way to MVP seasons, Mark Langston and Juan Guzman are on their way to 20 wins apiece, and the rest of the gang is just getting warmed up. Am I saying that the Senators could win it all in '94? **YES, I AM!**

Talk at you next Wednesday.

Skipper