

FROM THE BULLPEN



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THIS STRIKE SUCKS!

The *owners* are a bunch of fat windbags who know nothing about the finer points of the game, and apparently could care less about the sanctity of a player chasing a coveted statistical record or mark. In the immortal words of Tepkevia¹, **TRADITION!** Do these pompous fools know nothing about it? Don't they care?

The *players* are a pack of pampered and overpaid hot dogs who do not appreciate that they are being paid millions to play a child's game; who do not understand that what they are doing for pay, most of us would pay to do. They have become so used to getting their way, they will swallow anything that their thug leader, Donald Fehr², feeds to them.

Do any of the owners or players give a rat's posterior about the fans, the working

¹ From *Fiddler on the Roof*.

² Is it just me, or do the rest of you nearly hurl groceries when you listen to this lying sack of hot air spew out the Union's "party line" in each and every interview?

stiffs who come out to the ballpark, the vendors who hawk their peanuts and crackerjacks, or the very game itself? Judging by their actions in 1994, the plain answer is no.

And what about those of us who live our lives through the box scores; who know it's going to be a good day if Jeff Bagwell knocked in 4 runs, or Frank Thomas left the yard twice; who live and breathe the game of baseball? Do the boy millionaires and fat cat owners care one damned bit about us? Again, the answer is a resounding **NEIN!**

So what do we do? Other than blowing off steam, like I've just done, what do we do about it? I say we band together and force the striking parties to give us what we want -- baseball! And if the players continue to refuse a salary cap, just because Donald Fehr tells them to, I say we petition the owners to promote the best 700 players they can scrape together -- through the minor leagues, college baseball, semi-pro, or wherever -- and make them major leaguers. I love Frank Thomas and Carlos Baerga and Jeff Bagwell, but there will be another Jeff Bagwell, another Frank Thomas, and another Carlos Baerga. It may take two years, it may take five years, but whatever it takes, we will ultimately embrace these minor

leaguers as the best in baseball, and we can assure ourselves that there will not soon be another strike by players averaging more than a million dollars a season to play a boy's game.

Who's behind me on this one?

CUBS WIN!

Now that I've said my piece about the strike, I will return to the business at hand and report the final pre-strike (and perhaps season) standings for the 1994 Hot Stove League:

1. Cubs	6410
2. Reds	6209
3. Redbirds	6140
4. Chiefs	6135
5. Skipjacks	6116
6. Red Sox	6089
7. Blues	5585
8. Tribe	5486
9. Bronx Bombers	5412
10. Tigers	5382
11. Senators	5314
12. Pirates	5274

In the event that this season is over, *From the Bullpen* wants to be the first to congratulate the Cubs and their lovable manager, Shamu, for a championship season. You drafted a good team, Shamu, and have managed them well. You

helped yourself in the supplemental draft and through the free agent drafts, and you have resisted the trading shenanigans of Beelzebub (Possum). You have done everything that a manager needs to do to carry home The Cup as the championship owner/manager, and to gain the respect and admiration of your fellow managers. If this is it, my hat's off to you, buddy!

It's just too damned bad that there will always be an asterisk by your name on The Cup.

WEEK XIX

The nineteenth week of the Hot Stove League season produced the following scores (for four days of games, Monday through Thursday):

1. Cubs	274
2. Skipjacks	252
3. Chiefs	227
4. Tribe	216
5. Red Sox	191
6. Pirates	188
7. Tigers	182
8. Reds	175
9. Redbirds	155
10. Senators	130
11. Blues	117
12. Bronx Bombers	114

While the Cubs put together a respectable week to gain a lock on the pre-strike lead, the Senators faltered, dropping behind the Tigers, and nearly taking over Slo-Pay's spot in the out-house.

NOSTALGIA

I recently happened across a copy of the wildly popular ditty about that titanic trio of Cubs, Frank Chance, Johnny Evers and Joe Tinker. It's worth repeating here:

Baseball's Sad Lexicon

These are the saddest of possible words –

"Tinker to Evers to Chance."
Trio of bear Cubs and fleeter than birds –
"Tinker to Evers to Chance."

*Ruthlessly pricking our gonfalon bubble,
Making a Giant hit into a double,
Words that are heavy with nothing but
trouble –*
"Tinker to Evers to Chance"

These may have been sad words, but at least the words "work stoppage" did not appear.

ETC.

- I failed to report in the last issue of *FTB* that Mouse is once again in financial good standing with Bill James & Co., following a slight snafu over his credit card.

As you may recall, one of our recent Stat Packs listed the Bronx Bombers as having had their "Transactions Suspended,"³ immediately bringing upon Mouse varying degrees of pity, scorn and ridicule by his fellow HSL managers. Mouse immediately dialed up one of the nimrods at Bill James and straightened the matter out, demanding and receiving a full apology and letter of retraction addressed to *FTB*. Thank you for keeping the good name of the Hot Stove League good, Brother Morris.

- Recently snatching away the traveling "Butterfingers" Award from Mouse⁴ was Itchie Flukemeister, who had a soft pop fly⁵ hit to him at a recent game at Johnny Rosenblatt Stadium. After calling off all those around him and assuring his worshipful nephews and nieces that he would snare a souvenir for them, Brother Itchie flinched and let the soft fly drop through his soft but scared hands, only to be snatched away by a wheelchair-bound octogenarian with a patch over one eye. Don't worry, Itchie, I'm sure Zac will believe you 20 years from

³ Does this ring a bell, SloPay?

⁴ Remember the debacle in Yankee Stadium?

⁵ Anne described it as a "can of corn."

now, by which time your Blunder at the Blatt will be described by you as the winning catch in the College World Series.

- And speaking of blunders by Itchie, how many of you were aware that Itchie did not have Randy Johnson in his starting lineup for the 15-strikeout gem that he pitched on the last day of the season? But hey, what's 45 points?⁶ It seems that the Skipper may have some competition for "Mismanager of the Year."

- My good fortune with the geniuses down at Bill James continues. During the last week before the strike, I relied on the information in my daily fax that Allen Watson would be starting for the Cardinals on Wednesday night, and promoted him at about 11:15 p.m. on Tuesday evening. The next morning while perusing the box scores, I learned that Watson had pitched on Tuesday evening (picking up about 20 points) and wondered: (a) why my fax was wrong, and (b) why the young man who completed my transaction for me couldn't find it in his heart to alert me to the fact that Watson had already pitched that night when I called in the trade.

- As further evidence that the baseball gods are against the Senators this year: After the botched promotion of Pat Rapp, and after Bill James generously agreed to reverse the transaction at no cost to me, placing Todd Jones back in my minor league lineup, Jones quickly reached the stature of Senators' top pitcher during the ten-day snapshot given by our daily faxes (while still in my minor leagues, mind you), and earned a promotion to the majors. Whereupon, Jones pitched no more up until the strike, while Joe Grahe, whom Jones replaced in my starting lineup, went out and earned his first positive points (for the Senators minor league) in a long time. Hosed again. But perhaps the relevant question is, does anyone care?

⁶ Other than one spot in the final standings.

TAKE US OUT TO THE BALLPARK

We are all miserable with the baseball strike, and misery loves company, so let's get together and play some golf, commiserate, and then repair to Rosenblatt Stadium for an Omaha Royals game. I suggest next Thursday, August 25, 1994. Let's plan to tee it up at Tiberon at 1:00 p.m. or so, and then head out for one of the final Omaha Royals games of the year (their final homestand ends on Sunday, August 28, 1994). Please R.S.V.P. to Skipper.

Skipper