

# FROM THE BULLPEN



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Brethren:

Here we are in the shank of October, the fall foliage abounding, the frost on the pumpkin, and no World Series to watch or listen to on the radio. I became acutely aware of this gaping void in my life as I was driving from Dallas to Oklahoma City the other evening, when instead of listening to the melodic voices of Al Michaels, Vin Scully, Jack Buck, Tim McCarver or Bob Costas, I winced to the grating voice of Bum Phillips as he provided the color during the radio broadcast of the Houston Oilers/Philadelphia Eagles football game. It's just not the same. Not by a long shot.

Nothing earthshaking to report on in this issue, so I will merely toss out a few comments and observations for your reading pleasure or displeasure, as the case may be.

- Shamu\* has asked that I remind each of you (actually, the word that he used was "beg") that he would happily accept your \$100 payments even before we reassemble for our winter meeting. Checks should be made payable jointly to Charles D. Sinclair and the "Last Chance Mortgage Company." Concurrent with this issue of *From the Bullpen*, I am providing my own payment of \$100 to Brother Shamu\*, not necessarily out of

my intense loyalty to Shamu\* or from the goodness of my heart, but because I received in the mail liens from the companies holding the second and third mortgages on Shamu's\* dwelling.

Per our usual system of remuneration, I suggest that the owners of the 6th through 12th place teams (Itchie, McBlunder, Underbelly, Mouse, Big Guy, Skipper and SloPay) each make payment to Shamu\*, and that the owners of the 4th and 5th place teams (Possum and Rookie) make payment to our 2nd place finisher, the insufferable Magpie-Curby. The 3rd place finisher, B.T., has the satisfaction of not having to pay any amount for participation in the 1994 HSL (other than the modest 5-figure investment in faxes and transaction fees to Bill James).

- Never one to give up hope, Possum reportedly continues to run a simulated version of the Bill James system on his home computer. Through 184 simulated games, the Red Sox are now in 3rd place, and creeping up on the 2nd place team. Possum has vowed to continue running simulated statistics until he finally surpasses the Champion Cubs\* team. Moreover, Possum has traded for Bob Hamelin, Raul Mondesi and Greg Maddux in his simulated world, and has suggested that bonus points be awarded for their post-season awards, à la the pre-

vious practice of the HSL. Nice try, Possum, but no.

- Jim Ed (Rookie) continues to wallow in the misery of his beleaguered Hawkeyes, as they flounder under the reign of former Denver cop and used car salesman, Hayden Fry. In typical Iowaegan fashion, Jim Ed wakes up each Saturday morning praying for a Husker loss, begging for anything other than a blowout loss for his Hawkeyes, and whining about how he should have captured 3rd place in the HSL, *but for* those damned performance caps. And speaking of ugly caps, somebody please point out to Magpie-Curby that his new Greg Norman-style golf lid makes him look more like an overweight Argentinean gaucho than a member of the pro golf tour.

- And speaking of golf, thanks to B.T.'s recent invitation to take on the imposing challenge of his home course in Lincoln, I was able to set a personal golfing best at the Firethorn Country Club. Believe it or not (and for those of you who have played with me, you will probably choose *not*), I had a chance to crack the magical 80-barrier as we headed to the final hole at Firethorn. Regrettably, I found it most difficult to unleash a full swing at the ball on that hole with both hands firmly clenching my neck. Two shots in the sand on No. 18 and a 20-foot

putt that just rimmed out left me with an unsavory triple-bogey on the final hole, and converted my hoped-for 79 into an 82. Still, despite my near self-strangulation, I set a personal best with a minimal amount of bumping and fluffing, and managed to best Itchie's top score at Firethorn by 52 strokes. (Of course, while my mediocre 82 will be long forgotten when we are all in our 60's and 70's and enjoying the golden years of the Hot Stove League, it is a safe bet that Itchie's magical 134 will live on in infamy. The number just has a ring to it. Kind of like Al Geiberger's 59.)

- And while we're still speaking of golf, and rounds of infamy, let me share another little story with you. In a recent outing at the Benson Golf Course in Omaha, I had the pleasure of squaring off against Big Guy and Magpie-Curby for a friendly little game of Umbriago. As we reached the 7th green with Big Guy and Magpie-Curby already holding a sizeable lead, Magpie-Curby had an 11-inch putt for birdie, and, you guessed it, an Umbriago. With many, many points on the line, and a slight downhill putt, and with Magpie-Curby on the other end of the putter, my partner and I could not see our way fit to utter the word, "Gimme." And, as it turns out, with good reason. Magpie-Curby not only missed the putt, he missed it as bad as a putt can be missed. With only 11 inches to traverse, I estimate that his golf ball never got closer than 3 inches to the cup. I'll say it again: *The worst putt I have ever seen.* But you know what they say, Magpie-Curby, unlucky in love, unlucky in golf, but always a winner in the Hot Stove League!

- As a reminder to those of you who sometimes forget about the importance of being a member of the Hot Stove League, I provide herein a copy of an announcement in the Lincoln Star Newspaper about the marriage of Underbelly and Jody.

To think that a guy would have such pride in the HSL to list it in his wedding

announcement, to the exclusion of Underbelly's many other life's achievements (bungee jumping from a hot air balloon, parachuting, wearing a fez, riding a camel, being a member of Turks Anonymous, etc.). The man knows his priorities in life.

## NOSTALGIA

For those of you who have personally witnessed only an unassisted triple play, and have not yet had the distinction of also witnessing a perfect game, let me tell you, the perfect game is better. For one thing, you're not likely to miss it if you get a snootful and look the other way. For another, since there are no base-runners to watch, you have plenty of time to get yourself a snootful. To help all of you relive one of my life's great joys, I am enclosing herewith a copy of an article in the October 1, 1984, Dallas Morning News about Mike Witt's perfect game on September 30. While I am not personally mentioned in the article, I was in fact there, and I can prove it.

## MORE NOSTALGIA

With no live baseball to watch, I have spent a lot of time recently leafing through my recent editions of Baseball Digest. Each edition contains several servings of statistical goodies and nostalgic reminders. I share a couple of them with you now:

- **Rogers Hornsby (1915-1937):** Described by many of his peers as possessing "the coldest eyes" they ever saw, Hornsby is recognized as the greatest right-handed hitter in baseball history. His lifetime .358 batting average is second only to Ty Cobb's .367, and his .424 mark in 1924 is the highest single season average in the 20th century. He won seven N.L. batting titles and during a five-year span from 1921 to 1925 he hit a combined .402. Holds or shares more than 20 N.L. and more than 10 major league hitting records. He is one of only two players to win two Triple Crowns

and is the only player to collect 200 hits in a season for three different teams. As former player, Clyde Sukeforth, once explained, "When Hornsby had a bat in his hand, he had nothing but admirers." His only drawback as a player was that he had difficulty going back on short pops behind him. Elected to the Hall of Fame in 1942.

## WINTER MEETING

Due to the underwhelming response to my request for winter meeting preferences in the last issue of *F.T.B.*, I am at a complete loss as to when to try to schedule the meeting. With the holidays fast approaching, and the difficulties in congregating for a winter meeting during the busy season, I suggest that we each transmit payment to Shamu\* or Magpie-Curby as outlined above, and then plan to schedule the winter meeting for some date in January or early February. If there is any adamant opposition to this, let me know. Remember, in the law, silence may be acquiescence.

## NEXT ISSUE

In the next issue of *From the Bullpen*, I will provide an update of final HSL placements, dating back to that magical inaugural season of 1984, the year in which I drafted Possum's first championship team. But hey, he may win one on his own.

Ciao, baby.

Skipper