

# FROM THE BULLPEN



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Eastern Nebraska Division  
1995 Season

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Brethren:

## FREE AT LAST, FREE AT LAST

... is what Jeff Bagwell must be exuberantly proclaiming to himself, now that he has been extricated from the stifling environment of the Senators team, in one of the *many* blockbuster trades consummated on the '95 HSL Trip. Look for Bags to heat up with a vengeance, and to replicate his 1994 MVP season now that he is a member of the Lincoln Tribe. But hey, when the trade talk is blowing fast and furious, you don't want to be left out in the cold.

## TRADE SHOW

That's right, Possum, our junket to the Rockies was a veritable used car lot on wings and wheels, and with your checkered sports coat, straw hat and cane, you would have truly been in your element. But for you and the other two loads who missed this year's Rocky Mountain High, allow me to recap some of the bartering activity:

Trade One: Ismael Valdes and John Olerud (Reds) for J. T. Snow (Pirates)

Trade Two: Geronimo Berroa and Andy Benes (Reds) for Rod Beck and Bob Higinson (Chiefs)

Trade Three: Hideo Nomo and Mike Hampton (Tribe) for Jeff Bagwell (Senators)

Trade Four: Rico Brogna and Kevin Tapani (Chiefs) for Mel Rojas (Senators)

I know, I know, you're wondering if Skipper has lost his marbles or just flat given up on the 1995 season, trading last year's National League MVP and top point-getter (Bagwell) to Underbelly for a 28th round draft pick (Nomo) and a free agent (Hampton). Particularly questionable with Bagwell heating up during the month of June. My response? It just feels right.

Quick-Pay<sup>1</sup> is no doubt quite pleased with the early returns on his trade with Magpie. Imagine consummating your trade on Saturday, calling it in on Saturday night, having your new man Ismael start the game on Sunday, and reading in Monday's newspaper the following line score:

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<sup>1</sup> Slo-Pay's self-proclaimed new nickname after greening B.T.'s palm with reimbursement funds before their plane even entered the friendly skies

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Valdes	3-2/3	10	8	8	2	2

In his virgin outing as a member of the hapless Pirate pitching staff, Is-mael did more damage than the Exon Valdez, moonwalking the Pirates backward to the tune of 20 points. But don't worry, Quick-Pay, no doubt Ish the Fish will make a nice recovery.

## '95 TRIP: ROCKIES HAMMER EXPOS

The feature of the '95 Trip, of course, was seeing the powerful Rockies pound those scratching, clawing, never-say-die Expos in three straight matches at Coors Field. On Friday night we saw (as well as you can see with thick beer goggles) the Rockies crank out a 12-5 victory, featuring back-to-back-to-back home runs by Larry Walker, Andres Galarraga and Vinny Castilla; and a second shot by Vinny that cleared all of the seats in left field. For Saturday night's game, we may have had the best seats in the house for a riveting 8-3 Rockies victory, underscored by another two-tater night by Vinny Castilla (U-belly always said he was going to be great). And finally, on Sunday we witnessed yet another home

run derby contest by the Rockies, as they used four solo shots to spank the Expos for the fourth time in the four-game series, with a final tally of 4-1. Great stadium, good baseball.

Believe it or not, this was the 11th consecutive HSL Trip, and McBlunder, Shamu\* and Skipper have proudly attended each year's junket. Kudos, Brothers. How about a short recap for old times' sake:

1985	Kansas City
1986	Kansas City
1987	Kansas City
1988	Chicago
1989	K.C./Chicago/Milwaukee
1990	K.C./Texas
1991	Chicago (Comiskey Park)
1992	Detroit/Toronto/Cleveland
1993	Anaheim/San Diego/L.A.
1994	K.C./Boston/N.Y./Baltimore
1995	Denver

Eleven years, fourteen cities, fifteen ballparks. Wow!

## TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

As usual, the '95 Trip was chocked full of good times and great memories. If I might be so presumptuous as to recount a few of the '95 Trip highlights for you, it would go something like this:

- That death-defying (but soon to be routine) trek up the face of Mount Everest to reach Eagle's Nest.

- Ahhhhhh! Eagle's Nest.

- The feverish pace at which Itchie and Tony (Possum's Trip representative) pursued their goal of abject intoxication during Friday's golf outing at Evergreen.

- U-belly's refusal to produce a scorecard from the Evergreen Golf Course, or to provide even a ballpark estimate of his

score (was he concerned about exceeding Itchie's infamous 134 at Firethorn?).

- Watching Itchie try to keep a straight face as he contended (pretended?) that he scored an eagle at Evergreen to earn a skin.

- Watching the gritty determination of "One-Way" Tony as he tried without measurable success to will himself back to relative sobriety.

- Chef Larry's 6 a.m. breakfast extravaganza.

- The look of sheer terror on Squatting Bear (Shamu\*) as he experienced the top of Bear Mountain.

- Seeing John VanderWal break the Rockies single-season pinch-hit record (16) with a mammoth blast to right field.

- Those oh-so-tasty (and plentiful) honeywheat beers at the Denver Chophouse.

- The remarkable view from Section 311 at Coors Field, a full story above the right field foul pole.

- Shamu's\* unselfish and laudable gesture of offering up his box seat next to Itchie and Tony for the final half-inning of Saturday night's game.

- Slo-Pay's cause of action against the Bucksnot Inn for permanent gastrointestinal impairment.

- All ten occupants of the Eagle's Nest sawing logs like a timber mill, but each individual denying the personal habit of snoring.

- The ranchhand Sunday morning breakfast at C.C. Waters, and their subsequent filing of Chapter 7 bankruptcy after Shamu's\* interpretation of the "All You Can Eat" breakfast special.

- Blocking out the sun at the game with Big Guy's top-of-the-line sunglasses (how did I get in the bottom of the baby pool?)

- Hangin' with the funky locals at Little Bear.

- B.T.'s "in your face" retort to the mad-at-the-world hippie hacker at Evergreen (nice swing!).

- Big Guy's obvious pleasure watching newly-acquired Moises Alou hustle and scrap like he was trying to make the cut.

- Not hearing U-belly shout "I love my life!" anymore.

- Our 12-hour yak ride to Cleveland (oops, wrong year).

- Playing golf (you could call it that) with Giopetto (Tony) and his prevaricating puppet (Pinocchio f/k/a Itchie) at the scenic but impossible mountain course known as Eagle's Nest.

- Pinocchio's 32-inch drive on hole #15, followed by a straight-sideways shot into the deep forest (just how did he make bogey on that hole?).

- Skipper's winning score of 81 at Evergreen (hey, it was a highlight for me -- and yes, we bumped a few of them up).

- Tony's suicidal drive from Denver to Silverthorn (we only had to use three of the runaway truck ramps).

- Mountain air.

- Freedom.

- Brotherhood.

- Icy-brisk mountain showers.

- Outhouses.

- That view from B.T.'s deck.

- Coors Field. Ahhh!  
All in all, an enjoyable and memorable trip. Many thanks to B.T. for his always meticulous planning of the Trip and the use of Eagle's Nest as our base of operations.

## 1996 TRIP

It is of course customary to select our next year's trip locale at the end of each Trip. The sentiment for the 1996 Trip seems to be a mid-east swing to Pittsburgh and Cleveland. Three Rivers Stadium and Jacob's Field. Yes. Whose turn is it to plan this sure-to-be-great event? Possum? Probably not. If there are any volunteers, let me know.

## ITCHIE ITCHING FOR A WIN

Believe it or not, Itchie's Skipjacks have assumed the lead for the y1995 campaign for the second consecutive week. But it's close, fellas, real close. Here's how things stack up after 11 weeks of the season:

## STANDINGS THROUGH 11 WEEKS

1. Skipjacks	4065
2. Redbirds	3976
3. Red Sox	3921
4. Bronx Bombers	3892
5. Tigers	3851
6. Reds	3751
7. Blues	3653
8. Tribe	3436
9. Pirates	3430
10. Senators	3410
11. Chiefs	3350
12. Cubs*	3262

With All-Star bonus points included, here are the point totals for the 11th week:

1. Red Sox	553
2. Skipjacks	517

3. Chiefs	468
(T) Tribe	468
5. Tigers	455
6. Redbirds	437
7. Cubs*	391
8. Blues	385
9. Bronx Bombers	367
10. Pirates	365
11. Reds	356
12. Senators	339

Skipper

Those Skipjacks and Red Sox are on fire, but it's still a six- or seven-team race.

## SECOND HALF BLUES

There's nothing like getting off to a good start for the second half, eh? With my retooling of the Senators' pitching staff by adding Hideo Nomo, Mike Hampton and Kevin Tapani, the Senators figure to make a move in the second half of the season, right? Wrong. On Wednesday night, I'm watching ESPN Sports Center to catch the highlights of the games on the first day after the All-Star break, with four starting Senators pitchers on the mound. The first "highlight" I see is my knuckleballer, Steve Sparks, being taken out of the yard by Lance Johnson, his first home run of the year. And then by Ron Karkovice. The next ESPN highlight, in order, is seeing a three-run shot being hit off of Chris Haney. The next highlight, in order, is somebody (I forgot who) leaving the yard against Todd Stottlemyre. And the next highlight, in order, is a Philly infielder muffing a double play to allow Michael Mimbs to take his fourth consecutive loss. For the night? My four starting pitchers went 1 and 3, pitched 21 innings, gave up 20 earned runs (for a nifty 8.44 ERA), and managed to walk 12 batters. How many points did I lose? You do the math.

Ahh, I love this game.

Great Trip. See you next issue.