

FROM THE BULLPEN



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Compadres:

A LITTLE HELP FROM MR. WEBSTER, PLEASE

i-ro-ny *n.*; *pl. -nies.* ... **6.** an outcome of events contrary to what was, or might have been, expected.

... As in, it would be ironic to trade away one's best ballplayer for a Japanese twirler, and then in their first matchup, to watch one's former best ballplayer hit a ball out of the county against one's new Oriental pitcher.

I don't know how many Hot Stove League members saw their way clear to comment to me on the *irony* of Jeff Bagwell's recent stratospheric homerun ball in his first at-bat against Hideo Nomo in the bottom of the 1st on July 25. But it was more than three. And while they were unable to measure the length of the blast since the ball disintegrated upon reentering the atmosphere, I heard one cheeky ESPN commentator opine that it was possibly the longest shot since the start of World War II. Thank you very much, Jeff. You, too, Hideo.

And speaking of Hideo(us), what is the deal with his injury that apparently first surfaced before the All-Star break but did not become known to me until Tuesday night's debacle? When Underbelly told me that Hideo was working on a great *split-finger*, I thought he was talking about a fastball and not a fingernail. I demand an investigation into this outrageous failure to disclose a material fact in trade negotiations. However, I would be willing to drop all charges in exchange for a rescission of the transaction and reinstatement of Bagwell, Nomo, and Hampton to their original clubs. Seems reasonable, doesn't it?

So much for my life. Let's take a look at the standings to see how the rest of you are faring. The cocksure Skipjacks continue to lead the pack after 13 weeks of play, although Itchie's margin has slipped a bit since last week. Here are the standings:

THROUGH WEEK 13

1. Skipjacks	4651
2. Tigers	4510
3. Redbirds	4507
4. Red Sox	4408
5. Reds	4421
6. Bronx Bombers	4412
7. Blues	4236
8. Tribe	4148

9. Pirates	4129
10. Senators	3917
11. Cubs*	3854
12. Chiefs	3813

FOR THE WEEK

1. Pirates	475
2. Tribe	441
3. Tigers	433
4. Redbirds	385
5. Reds	378
6. Cubs*	349
7. Red Sox	347
(T) Skipjacks	347
9. Bronx Bombers	345
10. Senators	316
11. Blues	305
12. Chiefs	278

The three hottest teams for Week 12 were the Tigers, Pirates, and on the strength of Bagwell's monster week, the Tribe. All three teams far exceeded 400 points for the week. As luck would have it, the two hottest teams, the Pirates and Tribe, were next up the ladder from the Senators, and used to be within realistic range. With their huge weeks, the chasm has widened, leaving the Senators with the lowly Chiefs and Cubs* across the Royal Gorge from the rest of the pack. But the rest of you shouldn't worry about us, boys, go ahead and have a good time.

CRY ME A RIVER

How are things going with former Senator black eye Chris Haney, you might ask. Here's how: According to my Stats sheet, in the 10 outings that Mr. Haney had before he became a Senator or Senator starter, including several wasted stellar performances in my minor league, Mr. Haney managed to score 145 points for an average of 9.7 points per game. In fact, Haney became stronger as he became closer to becoming a Senator starter. On June 8, Chris threw 7 innings of 3-hit ball, scoring 20 points for the Senators minor league team. In his next outing on June 13, he threw 7 more quality innings, and picked up 24 more points. And in his last start, before becoming a Senator starter, on June 18 Chris threw 7 innings of 4-hit, no-run ball for 17 more points. Then came his promotion.

After being promoted on June 22 (in anticipation of a June 23 start after four days of rest), for some reason Chris got shelved by the Royals until June 27. Apparently, Booney felt that nine days between starts was a good formula for Chris. This long hiatus allowed Haney to cool off just enough to ruin his career, as Haney began his stint as a Senator starter by going 3 innings and giving up 10 hits, moonwalking the Senators backward to the tune of -13. Chris' next start on July 2 was a bit better, as he managed to earn 9 positive points for the day, but he quickly reverted to form with his next outing on July 6, going 4.2 innings and giving up 5 earned runs, and negating the Senators to the tune of -10 points. And as if that were not enough, Chris' magnus opus with the Senators was his splendid outing on July 12, 1995 (and his last as a Senator starter, I might add), when he toughed it out for 2 whole innings, giving up 6 earned runs and ratcheting the Senators back 19 notches. *In sum, in his 4 outings as a Senator starter,*

Haney lost a net total of -33 points. Very nice.

So how have I rejuvenated Chris' career, you ask? By demoting him, of course. And even though I learned recently that Haney was put on the DL with a herniated disk in his back (it took the crackerjack team physician four beatings and three weeks to figure that out??), as soon as he gets healed up and back in the rotation, he will undoubtedly regain his old form and begin earning positive points for some other team.

I could go on and on and on. In fact, I think I will. I'm sure that none of the rest of you are faced with this problem, but it seems like every time I promote one of my starting pitchers, he goes in the tank and has two or three miserable outings. Then I demote him, as logic would dictate, and he has exactly two strong or even superior outings during the ten days that I am unable to promote him. Then, as logic would dictate, I promote him to start the cycle of misery all over again. Chris Haney, Tom Gordon, Ben McDonald, Pat Hentgen -- these names all come to mind. And now I note that Steve Parris has had two excellent outings since I picked him up in the free agent draft and deposited him in my minors. I can assure you that his promising career is about to come to a screeching halt, as I have now promoted him to my major league team. Mark my words, Steve Parris is about to get lit up like, well, the rest of the Senators staff.

But I'm not bitter. And I am not yet so desperate that I have stooped to the depths of one other League member who recently -- in what can only be seen as an act of sheer desperation -- reportedly drafted the pariah of major league baseball, Darryl Strawberry. That is correct, fellas, your eyes do not deceive you. B.T. went fishing in the league cesspool and pulled up this bottom-dweller whom even George Steinbrenner is having some qualms about playing in the major leagues. This alone should tell us

a great deal about the cloth from which our fellow league owner is cut. Frankly, I now have some grave, grave concerns about B.T.'s future, not only as a fellow owner in the Hot Stove League, but also as my brother-in-law. I am not sure that I can live with someone who would draft someone like Darryl Strawberry. I understand that desperate times call for desperate measures, but this is pushing the edge of the envelope.

Next week's story: The Danny Jackson/Senator saga.

DIRECTIONS TO THE BULLPEN

I realized that in my last issue of *FTB* I failed to give you directions to our cabin in Ginger Cove for this Saturday's soiree.

It is real easy to get to. Take Maple Street west until you get to the town of Valley (or take Dodge Street west until it ends, and then veer right on the highway until you come to Valley); go straight through the town's only stop light, and turn left where the sign indicates Highway 64, just past the *old* water tower. Stay on this road for a couple of miles until you come to the entrance to Ginger Cove (just about a mile past the entrance to Ginger Woods); turn left into the entrance, and left again, following the main road around until you come to Shaker Circle. Turn right into the circle and proceed until you reach Lot #63.

See you Saturday.

Skipper