

FROM THE BULLPEN



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SKIPJACKS STILL LEADING PACK

To the great dismay of many, Pinocchio's pack of prevaricators continue to set the pace for the 1995 Hot Stove League season, cracking the 5,000 point barrier and maintaining a healthy 161-point lead over his closest rival, Big Guy and the Tigers. Hot on the heels of the Tigers are (groan) the Red Sox and the Redbirds. A tier below them are the Bronx Bombers and Reds, and after that it's irrelevant. Here are the standings after 14 weeks:

1. Skipjacks	5042
2. Tigers	4881
3. Red Sox	4833
4. Redbirds	4826
5. Bronx Bombers	4698
6. Reds	4649
7. Blues	4584
8. Tribe	4524
9. Pirates	4507
10. Senators	4341
11. Cubs*	4177
12. Chiefs	4142

The hot team of the week was the Senators, and the laggard was the Reds. Here's how each team fared for week 14:

1. Senators	424
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2. Skipjacks	391
3. Pirates	378
4. Tribe	376
5. Tigers	371
6. Red Sox	365
7. Blues	348
8. Chiefs	329
9. Cubs*	323
10. Redbirds	319
11. Bronx Bombers	286
12. Reds	228

IT CAME AROUND

By now you have all heard about Jeff Bagwell's tragic and possibly season-ending injury. I won't say that I predicted this fate for Bags, but the guy has a bullseye tattooed on his left hand. In any event, since my plea for a rescission of the Bagwell-for-Splitfinger-and-Hampton deal fell upon deaf ears, the transaction will have to stand. Maybe it's just some higher power's way of punishing the shifty U-Belly for foisting the crippled Oriental on me, and then making up one of his trademark bald-headed lies about having to work to avoid a confrontation at Ginger Cove on Saturday last. Perhaps U-Belly was tipped off that he would facing the HSL Ethics Panel's version of the Spanish Inquisition on Saturday, and knew that he would break down under the hot lights. Whatever.

As goes the well-worn cliché, *what goes around . . .* Har-de-har-har.

And speaking of last Saturday's soiree at The Bullpen, for those of you who were just too damned busy to make it (there's no sense in naming names, but you know who you are), you missed an event which may be even rarer than the unassisted triple play: *Possum was there!*

That's right, your ears may be full of wax and otherwise unkempt, but they do not deceive you. Possum was there! Breaking a string that was beginning to rival Cal's, Possum made it to his first Hot Stove League function since that little misunderstanding with Underbelly when they shared a bed on the 1985 junket to Kansas City. Max and Taylor in tow, Possum came, swam, ate, drank, and didn't really even piss anybody off. Which sets him apart from a number of other League members.

FAREWELL TO BAGS

Before I learned of his unfortunate injury, I woke up in a cold sweat one early morning last weekend, having experienced a nightmare in which I dreamt that I had actually traded away my first (Bagwell) and fourth (Rojas) round draft picks for a handful of colored beans.

After pinching myself Indigo blue, and reading and re-reading my Stats, Inc. statistics for the past couple of weeks, I eventually had to accept the fact that it was not a nightmare -- I really did trade them off, and to the managers of two of the perhaps three teams that I have a whisker of a chance of outdueling this year. Then I went and grabbed my well-used Pender guitar from the Volkswagen minibus, and sat out in the dewy morning and wrote this little ditty:

*I Dreamed I Swapped My
Star Last Month¹*

*I dreamed I swapped my star last month
As dumb as that would be.
Said I to 'Bags, "You're hot as hell. How
come you sucked for me?
How come you sucked, for me?"*

Thank you very much.

BEEF STEW

I indicated last week that in this issue you would get the Danny Jackson story. Although it is too painful to recount in detail, let me give you the short version.

Last year the guy rings up 368 points, second best among left-handers (Randy Johnson had 413), and eighth best overall. More points than Dennis Martinez, more than Pedro Martinez, more than Ramon Martinez, more than Appier, more than Mussina, more than Heathcliff, more than just about everybody. So he was a savvy pick in the 12th round, right? Wrong!

Danny-boy started off in the hole for the Senators right out of the gate, with a negative -2 and a negative -10 score in his first two outings. Danny followed those up with a negative -8 performance in his

¹ Sung to the tune of *I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night* (with apologies to Joan Baez).

third start, but improved dramatically to actually earn 1 point in his fourth start. In start five, Danny moonwalked backwards to the tune of negative -18, and proceeded to lose 5 more points in his sixth outing. In game seven, Danny managed to give up 15 more points, for a net total of negative -56 points for his first seven starts. That's when I had to pull the plug on old Danny. Loyal manager that I am, I stayed with him all the way until June 19, when I finally, sadly, released him from the Senators squad. And that's just about when he turned his life around. Since that time, after being picked up by my shiftless brother-in-law, Danny has actually won a couple of games for a hapless Cardinal team, and has put together six or seven strong outings over the past six weeks or so. I don't even want to know how many points he has earned for the arch enemy manager of the Chiefs. Simply too painful.

And while I am on the subject of players I now hate, throw Phil Plantier and Ben McDonald on the list. I hold onto these two relatively high draft choices through good times and bad, as they go *on the DL, off the DL, on the DL, off the DL*, until they finally earn their release from the Senators team. Then Plantier gets traded to the Padres, gets picked up by, you guessed it, my shiftless brother-in-law, and proceeds to have his best game of the year. No doubt Phil will chalk up a whole bunch of points for the Lincoln Chiefs, when it was I who stuck with the guy through thick and thin.

But enough whining. Life goes on.

PICS

Enclosed are some pictures from the '95 Trip for your amusement. In reflecting back on the '95 Trip, I am already eagerly anticipating our junket to Cleveland and Pittsburg in '96. I am still waiting for volunteers to plan next year's event of events. Who will come forward

and shoulder part of the load? I'm waiting.

'Nuff said for now. See you next week.

Skipper