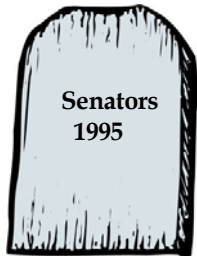


# FROM THE BULLPEN



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1995 Season

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The week of August 13-20 will be forever etched in my memory bank as the week that the pathetic pack of squids known as the 1995 Senators laid down and died. This miserable collection of underachieving wussies managed to scrape together the sum total of 227 points for the week, composed of daily totals of 30, 40, 37, 7, 18, 53, and 33. I hate them, I hate them, I hate them, I hate them, I hate them, I hate them, I hate them, I hate them, I hate them, I hate them, I hate them.

Why do I hate my team so much, you ask? Thank you for asking. Not only does this pack of slugs eat my heart out each time they get hot and get my hopes up only to go into a major swoon, they continue to torment me daily by playing the old shell game, particularly my despised pitching staff. You think your hot pitchers are up here in the majors?

Wrong. They're down here in the minors. You think that demoting this louse of a pitcher after three excruciating losses is a good idea? Wrong, he should be up in the majors for his next two or three stellar outings.

And I have examples. Oh, boy, do I have examples. This past Sunday, August 20, I had five of my starting pitchers on the mound, Nomo, Sparks, Parris, Rekar and Hentgen. I have Nomo and Sparks in the majors, and the other three slugs in the minors. Hentgen, for obvious reasons. Rekar, because he was throwing at Coors Field and tends to give up a painful number of runs at that facility. Parris, because I'm incompetent. Do I even need to tell you what happened? Nomo gives up 5 runs to the powerhouse Mets, including a 3-run tater by the always-dangerous Jose Vizcaino (his second of the year), and limps in with 6 positive points (only because he had 13 strikeouts). Sparks threw a lot of sparks into the wood chips and got bruised up badly, giving away all 6 points that had been earned for the Senators by Nomo. Middle reliever Dave Veres was the shining light of the pitching staff, garnering positive 4 points for his inning of work. As to the minor leaguers, Rekar pitched like Sandy

Koufax for 8 innings, chalking up 24 points. Hentgen continued with his practice of putting daggers in my heart, ringing up a positive-point performance of 14 points. And Mr. Parris added to the pain by contributing 16 positive points. The totals: 4 positive points for my starters, 54 positive points for my minor leaguers. I don't know if I can take it anymore.

As for Pat Hentgen, he will be dying on the vine in my minor league organization, unless and until he strings together a half dozen shutouts or so. In which case I will either promote him to the majors, or hire a sniper in Toronto to finish him off for what he has done to my psyche.

## WEEK 17: TIGERS FALTER, SKIPJACKS EXPAND LEAD

Although it was reported in last week's issue that Itchie's juggernaut had sprung a leak and was treading water, thanks in part to another stellar performance by Greg Maddux on Sunday night and a disappointing week

by the Tigers, the Skipjacks have actually expanded last week's 111-point lead to 127 points. The Redbirds blew by the Tigers like they were standing still to take over possession of second place, while Hillbelly's Tribe soared into 5th place, their highest standing for many, many moons. The slumping, sickening, downright disgusting Senators managed to keep a toehold on 10th place, but now have only an 8-point lead over the 11th-place Chiefs and 14 points on the cellar-dwelling Cubs.\* That is correct, both the Chiefs and the Cubs\* are now threatening to escape the bottom two layers of the outhouse, soon to be occupied by the Senators.

The point totals after 17 weeks are as follows:

1. Skipjacks	6093
2. Redbirds	5966
3. Tigers	5910
4. Red Sox	5720
5. Tribe	5678
6. Bronx Bombers	5625
7. Reds	5587
8. Pirates	5566
9. Blues	5538
10. Senators	5200
11. Chiefs	5192
12. Cubs*	5186

The weekly totals for Week 17 read like this:

1. Tribe	416
2. Redbirds	389
3. Cubs*	384
4. Red Sox	361
5. Skipjacks	359
6. Bronx Bombers	325
7. Pirates	306
8. Reds	296
9. Chiefs	288
10. Tigers	287
11. Blues	254
12. Senators	227

Despite my fleecing of Hillbelly in the Bagwell-for-Nomo-and-Hampton trade, his Tribe team outperformed the Senatros for about the fifth week in a row, this

past week by a total of 189 points. I finally have to agree with what B.T. has been proclaiming for all these many years, that is, that this game is based almost entirely on luck. Not like it was in 1990, when winning an HSL championship really meant something.

## 1985: A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

Just the other day, after a golf outing with B.T. and Big Guy, the three of us were sitting around the table reliving Big Guy's 5-putt on No. 18 at Champion's, when Big Guy abruptly changed the subject of discussion to the 1985 inaugural Hot Stove League season. As we were ruminating on that glorious first season in the Hot Stove League, B.T. bobbed his beak out of his beer stein just long enough to bark at me for not crediting him as one of the HSL founding fathers in my recent missive to Matt Greenberger. I reminded B.T. that he was not one of the four original members in founding the Hot Stove League and participating in the original draft, whereupon Big Guy corrected me to point out that only three of us (Big Guy, Shamu\* and Skipper) drafted teams on that memorable first draft day (April 13, 1985, according to the records).

After being reminded that there were only three of us at the inaugural draft and that it was yours truly who drafted Possum's championship team that year, we began reminiscing about the particulars of that holy first HSL draft day, held at my bachelor townhome at The Chalet. Whereupon Big Guy took issue with my recollection of *where* the first draft occurred, and stated that he was quite sure that the first HSL draft took place at my former apartment at Kensington Woods. When I slammed down my beer and told Big Guy I was so sure that the draft was at my Chalet townhouse and not at the Kensington Woods apartment that I would bet him

100,000 clams on the issue, B.T. reminded me that I have commented more than just once about what a tremendous memory Big Guy has, the best memory of anyone I know. Whereupon Big Guy reminded me of my willingness to wager my home with Itchie that it was Frank Chance who was known as the Tall Tactician and not Connie Mack, about which I was dead wrong (albeit also dead drunk at the time).

In any event, my confidence shaken a bit by these comments of B.T. and Big Guy, we reduced the wager to \$10, shook hands on it, and I promised to provide Big Guy proof positive by finding a copy of my lease at The Chalet. The lease was faxed to Big Guy a few days later, which lease indicated that I was a resident at The Chalet in April of 1985 when the inaugural draft took place. And of course I expected prompt payment of my \$10 wager.

Apparently not yet ready to concede the bet, Big Guy then contacted the easily-molded Shamu\* to persuade him to give testimony, if necessary, that the original draft took place at Kensington Woods and not at The Chalet. Not unexpectedly, and no doubt with a promise of a reward of ample foodstuffs, Shamu\* turned State's evidence and reportedly now sides with Big Guy on his version of the story. I'm sure he'll be a believable witness.

Notwithstanding the little difference of opinion resulting in our wager, it was fun to remember the 1985 season and the glory of that time. Let me share with you a few remembrances of that season. In the first round, the Royals (precursors to the Senators) took Cal Ripken; the Red Sox selected Dale Murphy, the Cubs\* took, who else, Eddie Murray; and the Tigers selected Lance Parrish.

In Round 2 it was Dave Winfield, Rick Sutcliffe, Rickey Henderson, and Alan Trammell.

In Round 3, the Royals took Tony Pena (hard to believe, I know), then Dwight Evans for the Red Sox, Ryne Sandberg for the Cubs\*, and yet another Tiger for the Tigers, Lou Whitaker.

Under Big Guy's concocted scoring system, Don Mattingly, a 4th-round draft pick in 1985 by the Red Sox, was the top scorer with 1778 points. The top ten scorers looked like this:

1. Don Mattingly	1778
2. Dale Murphy	1613
3. Willie McGee	1609
4. George Brett	1586
5. Eddie Murray	1571
6. Tommy Herr	1562
7. Dave Parker	1561
8. Rickey Henderson	1549
9. Keith Hernandez	1543
10. Cal Ripken	1528

Big Guy had the top pitcher in the league in 1985, Dwight Gooden with 992 points; as well as the second-highest points scoring pitcher, Orel Hershiser with 723. The top ten pitchers from 1985:

1. Dwight Gooden	992
2. Orel Hershiser	723
3. Fernando Valenzuela	673
4. Ron Guidry	623
5. Dan Quisenberry	599
6. Danny Cox	563
7. Joaquin Andujar	553
8. Lee Smith	544
9. Charlie Leibrandt	523
10. Guillermo Hernandez	522

For those of you who have not heard us repeat the 1985 HSL story 500 times, after this initial draft of players, my brother-in-law heard about the rotisserie league concept and begged and pleaded to join our ranks. When we resisted on the basis that we had already gone through the draft process, B.T. offered to pick his team from the remaining chaff in the league, to which the rest of us readily agreed. Picking up such hot-out-of-the-box stars as Tommy Herr and Andy Hawkins gave B.T. a huge

initial lead on the field, and the rest of us began wondering whether we had made a mistake in allowing B.T. to draft his team in this fashion. B.T. continually assured us that B.T.'s team (then known as the Giants) would come back to the field, and true to his word, it soon did.

The rest of the story is part of League lore. Shamu\* finished the regular season far ahead of the field with 16,610 points, followed by the Red Sox with 16,264, the Royals with 15,854, the Tigers with 15,531, and the last-place Giants with 14,951. However, in those days of post-season award points, Shamu\* was shut out and finished the season with 16,610. The Red Sox, with the team I picked for him, swept the MVP awards in each league, picking up 500 additional points to allow him to finish at 16,764 points, the League Champion. And Shamu\* still has not purged himself of the pain from that season.

In looking down the rosters from the 1985 season, I see that the Cubs\* had Roy Smalley on their roster. Nice hair, Shamu.\* And from the "Where Are They Now" Department, Tim Teuffel, Kiko Garcia and Ozzie Virgil made their way onto the first season Hot Stove League rosters. Some pretty forgettable names.

And that about does it for my walk down Memory Lane to the 1985 season. Living in the past, you say? You better believe it. It's a heck of a lot better than the present.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- I failed to point out last week that the Redbirds chalked up 236 pitching points for the week ended August 13, 1995, on their way to the second-best-ever total of 497. This 236 point-total bested the tie between the Chiefs and Senators at 233 for the top pitching week of all time.

- A review of last week's *Stats, Inc.* materials revealed that Shamu\* made exactly 0 transactions for the week ended August 13, 1995. So, although Shamu\* has given up the ghost for this season, his team still managed to far exceed the weekly total of the Senators, and is now nipping at my team's heels.

- When Gary Disarcina went down with his season-ending injury a few weeks ago, I was left to pick between Orlando Miller and Royce Clayton in the following Sunday night's free agent draft. Orlando had a bit better points-per-game average, and was just coming off a 2 homerun, 5 RBI night. Clayton, on the other hand, had done absolutely nothing in the preceding several weeks. So of course I took Miller, and of course he has been on the schnide ever since. In his first full week as a Senator, Orlando started six games and totaled negative -5 points for the stretch. In the second week, he played in exactly one game, and has apparently been replaced in the Astros lineup by Gutierrez. The shell game strikes again.

- The Atlanta trip, September 23-24, is alive and well and picking up steam. Hillbelly has thrown his name into the hopper for the weekend, and McBlunder indicated that he would be a "go" but for the fact that he has a guys' trip to Wrigley Field planned for this weekend, and would be pushing it to try for another kitchen pass so soon. But his intentions are good. Any of the rest of you girly-men want to join us for a trip to the Old South? Let me know.

See you next week.

Skipper