

FROM THE BULLPEN



Official Publication of
The Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
1997 Season

Edition No. 39
December 17, 1997

*Our
218th
Issue*

Brethren:

Greetings of the season, one and all. This will be our last edition of the year of *From the Bullpen*, so try to give me your full attention one last time this year, eh?

Enclosed are a few pics from the post-season celebration shindig at my house. Thanks to the seven of you who showed up to celebrate the Senators' resurgence as a HSL powerhouse. I realize that the free food, beer, and sportswear may have had something to do with your attendance, as well. All in all, I think a good time was had by all, although Rube choked a bit when it came to uttering the "We salute you, Skipper" tribute orchestrated by my family co-conspirator. Nobody will ever call you a sore loser, Jimmy – at least not for this season.

For those of you who were not able to attend, I am also sharing with you the fruits of the first official mock draft for the 1998 season.

Team	1	2	3	4
1. Senators	Maddux	Knoblauch	Castilla	Shaw
2. Redbirds	Griffey	R.Alomar	Mussina	
3. Red Sox	Piazza	K.Brown	Thome	C.Jones
4. Blues	R.J.	B.Williams	Hoffman	
5. S-Jacks	F.Thomas	Biggio		
	Glavine	T.Martinez		
6. Reds	A.Rodriguez		Smoltz	Salmon
7. Tigers	Bonds	M.Rivera	Cone	Jeter
8. Chiefs	L.Walker	N.Garcia	Lofton	
	Sheffield			
9. Cubs*	J.Bagwell	M.Vaughn	J.Gonzales	Nomo

- | | | | | |
|-------------|------------|---------|--------------|------------|
| 10. Tribe | P.Martinez | McGwire | Larkin | B.Anderson |
| 11. Bombers | R.Clemens | Edgar | M. Schilling | Wetteland |
| 12. Pirates | A.Belle | I.Rod | Neagle | |
| | Gallaraga | | | |

In addition, I am reiterating here for posterity the Top Ten list presented to Rube on the back of his resplendent Redbird T-shirt, replete with handsome logo.

Top Ten List of Reasons Rube Won't/Can't Ever Win the HSL

10. Indigenous single digit IQ proving a real handicap.
9. Usually three sheets to the wind by sixth round of draft.
8. Must be taller than Cup to win.
7. In deference to U-belly, refuses to win until Tribe wins.
6. Bill James hates Hayden Fry. Too.
5. Best client will take all legal work elsewhere if Redbirds win.
4. Cup will burst into flames if Iowegian's name inscribed on it.
3. Anybody with Fish-Art that ugly doesn't deserve to win.
2. See team logo and motto on reverse side. Enough said?
- 1a. Little-known proviso in League By-laws will dissolve league first.

And the Number 1 reason the Crimson Chirpers will Never, Ever win this thing:

1. BUSER REALLY RHYMES WITH LOSER, NOT HOOSIER.

Some of you may know that big-talking B.T. has a ten-year bet with Rube that the Redbirds will not capture a single HSL crown during that span of time. The house will be taking side bets on this one.

Speaking of bets between B.T. and Jim Ed, however, I am duty-bound to report that Rube recently bested the Big Bwana in their international golf league.

As proof positive, I enclose a copy of the final standings furnished to me by my office neighbor, clearly establishing Rube's superiority in picking golf talent to that of B.T. Not exactly akin to a Hot Stove League crown, but nevertheless something to be proud of.

I would be remiss if I did not pass along my thanks and appreciation to Possum for not only graciously conveying his regrets at not being able to attend the Senators' postseason fete, but his kind and certainly unnecessary sending of a magnificent horseshoe-shaped congratulatory bouquet of flowers, and a cornucopias basket of fruit. How thoughtful! The rest of you insensitive no-shows take note.

**ALL-TIME
POINTS PER GAMERS**

As promised last issue, I provide you herewith a list of the Top Ten hitters, historically, on a points-per-game basis:

Hitters	Team	Year	Pts	PPG*
1. Jeff Bagwell	Senators	1994	640	5.8
2. Alex Rodriguez	Chiefs	1996	834	5.7
3. Frank Thomas	Redbirds	1994	643	5.7
4. Larry Walker	Redbirds	1997	862	5.7
5. Albert Belle	Cubs*	1994	587	5.5
6. Mike Piazza	Tribe	1995	583	5.2
7. Mike Piazza	Reds	1997	785	5.2
8. Ellis Burks	Cubs*	1997	797	5.1
(T) Albert Belle	Chiefs	1995	726	5.1
9. Ken Griffey	Chiefs	1994	570	5.1
10. Mark McGwire	Tribe	1996	661	5.1

Note that there are several entries from the strike-shortened 1994 season, including all-time leader Jeff Bagwell. Whether these buzzsaws could have kept up the pace for the entire season, we'll never know.

* Not including bonus points.

Although we have only a five-year data base to work with, in terms of points per game scored, Jeff Bagwell's hitting performance in 1994 would rank as the best-ever in the thirteen-year history of the Hot Stove League, if we were to compare apples with apples. But before Possum and Big Guy start sputtering to themselves and get their pencils out to do some ciphering on Don Mattingly's fabulous 1985 season, let me preempt their ill-fated endeavor by advising you that as great a year that Donnie Baseball had that season, it doesn't stack up to the performances of the last couple of years. Not counting the category of errors — for which I cannot find Mattingly's totals for 1985 — Donnie Baseball would have scored 706 total points in 1985 (4.4 PPG) under our current Bill James scoring system, not even good enough for the Top Ten on the All-Time List.

Pitching is another matter. If we take Orel Hershisier's numbers for 1988 and apply the Bill James current scoring system to them, the Big O probably would rank 2nd or 3rd All-Time, All-Time being defined as from the start of the Hot Stove

League in 1985. I am unable to come up with an exact point total for Hershisier, however, because my baseball encyclopedia does not list totals for "quality starts" or for unearned runs. However, certain estimates can be made which allow us to get close.

In 1988, Hershisier had a 23-and-8 record, started 35 games, had 1 save, pitched 267 innings, gave up 208 hits, walked 73 batters, and struck out 178 hitters. His ERA for the year was 2.26. These numbers yield a point total of 650.5 under the Bill James system. If we assume that Hershisier had 25 quality starts for the year — which seems reasonable, given his 23 wins and his 2.26 ERA for the year — and that he got credit for a Q1 on the one game that he saved, then you would have to add 77 additional points to the total, yielding a figure of 727.5 points. If you assume that his teammates gave up 10 unearned runs while he was pitching, you would subtract an additional 10 points and be left with a figure of 717.5 points, or just a bit less than the Rocket's All-Time best of 746 points this season.

Another case in point is Doc Gooden, who had a tremendous year in 1985, when he went 24-and-4. Applying the same analysis and making the same sort of assumptions, it appears that Gooden would have scored something like 860 points under the Bill James system, more than 100 points more than the Rocket's All-Time best of 746. A close second behind Doc on this mythical All-Time list would be Greg Maddux's 1992 season for the Cubs*, when he went 20-and-11 and had an ERA of 2.18. Maddux would have scored roughly 810 points that season under the Bill James system.

1997 DRAFT, REVISITED

Although some of you have expressed your feelings that you are at the saturation point regarding the 1997 season, I have one final tidbit of information to pass along, merely as food for thought. Since we do not yet have point totals for all players who played in the 1997 season (since the 1998 draft form has not yet been provided), I was only able to recap point totals from the 1997 draft for all players who ended the season on an active roster in the league, but nevertheless, I provide you with the points summary on all such players. Using these numbers, you are able to see how each of you fared after the first three rounds and after the first five rounds of the draft:

Chiefs (1st)	3 rds - 1634	5 rds - 2652
Redbirds (2nd)	3 rds - 2171	5 rds - 3116
Tribe (3rd)	3 rds - 1724	5 rds - 2702
Red Sox (4th)	3 rds - 1773	5 rds - 2964
Tigers (5th)	3 rds - 1277	5 rds - 2672
Reds (6th)	3 rds - 1893	5 rds - 3006
Blues (7th)	3 rds - 1788	5 rds - 2859
Cubs* (8th)	3 rds - 1784	5 rds - 2402
Senators (9th)	3 rds - 1498	5 rds - 2614
Pirates (10th)	3 rds - 1451	5 rds - 2380
Skipjacks (11th)	3 rds - 1472	5 rds - 2274
Bombers (12th)	3 rds - 1648	5 rds - 2009

As you can see, if the Draft had ended after the first 3 rounds, the Redbirds would have been the run-away champions, followed by the Reds. If the Draft had only lasted five rounds, Rube still would have won his first-ever HSL championship, leading the way with 3116, followed by the Reds at 3006. Unfortunately for these two, the Draft lasted longer than five rounds, and it was from round 6 on that the men were separated from the boys. And also it was about then that a certain manager, who shall remain nameless, must have began dipping into the Barley Corn rather heavily.

And finally, I give you the top point producers for each round of the 1997 Draft:

1.	Mike Piazza	Reds	785
2.	Edgar Martinez	Redbirds	654
3.	Larry Walker	Redbirds	862
4.	Craig Biggio	Tigers	736
5.	Roger Clemens	Red Sox	746
6.	Denny Neagle	Tribe	567
7.	Curt Schilling	Skipjacks	636
8.	Nomar Garciaparra	Senators	717
9.	Tino Martinez	Skipjacks	654
10.	Rusty Greer	Red Sox	599
11.	Bob Higginson	Pirates	540
12.	Tony Gwynn	Skipjacks	635
13.	Paul O'Neill	Tigers	571
14.	Tony Clark	Red Sox	568
15.	Delino DeShields	Red Sox	550
16.	Jeff Shaw	Senators	575
17.	Darryl Kile	Bombers	601
18.	Jay Bell	Chiefs	595
19.	Charles Johnson	Chiefs	435
20.	John Olerud	Red Sox	511
21.	John Franco	Tigers	418
22.	Todd Zeile	Tigers	479
23.	Luis Gonzales	Cubs*	367
24.	Jeff Kent	Reds	572
25.	Johnny Damon	Skipjacks	315
26.	Jeff Blauser	Tigers	534
27.	Paul Sorrento	Red Sox	411
28.	Edgardo Alphonso	Blues	545

Looks like the Red Sox got the best of us in the most rounds (six). So how come his team wasn't even in the running?

HSL HOLIDAY LUNCH

We are on for next Monday (my last newsletter said Tuesday, but Monday works better for most) at Trovato's in Dundee at noon. Be there.

Happy holidays, baseball buddies.
Best of luck to each of you in 1998.

Very truly yours,

Skipper