

# FROM THE BULLPEN



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

Edition No. 32  
September 17, 1997

*Our  
211th  
Issue*

## REDBIRDS LOADED FOR BEAR; SENATORS IN CROSSHAIRS

Okay, if the point is that it's great to have an exciting finish of the HSL season, *I get it*. Now that we've had our fun, let's return to the status quo and let the Senators up off the mat. In that Rube has further reduced my team's lead (from 615 points to 440 to 294 to 221, all in the last three weeks), we've had our share of excitement and fun for the year.

Please, whoever it is out there that is toying with me, let me have my old team back and let's get the end of the season over with with the Senators on top. If it's this or Chinese water torture, give me a 55 gallon drum of H<sub>2</sub>O and a plane ticket to Shanghai any day of the week.

So what happened during Week 24, you ask? As far as the rest of your teams go, I could care less. As far as the Senators and Redbirds go, the Gutless Wonders from Capitol Hill continued their uncanny imitation of the '64 Phillies and collectively laid down while the Redbirds drove their steamroller over them. 330 points for the Crimson Chirpers, 257 for the Senators, and another 73 points chopped off the Senators' dwindling lead.

What makes it all the more terrifying for yours truly is that all of this damage was done before any of the caps started taking their toll. Now they have. I am no longer getting any points for pitching effectiveness (not that my pitchers have been anything remotely resembling effective the last three weeks), and the Senators are regularly losing 8 to 12 to 16 points a night for home runs that are nothing more than long singles as far as the Skipper is concerned. Mean people suck, and so do points caps.

But other than that, my life is a bed of damned roses, the recent heat and humidity and a wife in the last month of pregnancy notwithstanding. I love my life, even if it doesn't include a HSL crown this season.<sup>1</sup>

Week 24 went something like this:

### WEEK 24 TOTALS

1. Tigers <sup>2</sup>	378
2. Bronx Bombers <sup>3</sup>	371
3. Red Sox	365
4. Redbirds	330
5. Cubs*	325
6. Blues	309
7. Skipjacks	300

<sup>1</sup> This is a bald-faced lie, as Brother U-Belly might put it.

<sup>2</sup> This is not a typo.

<sup>3</sup> And this is not a typo, either.

8. Reds	277
9. Senators	257
10. Chiefs	244
11. Pirates	189
12. Tribe	174

And now for a look at where everyone stands through 24 weeks.

### STANDINGS THRU 24 WEEKS

1. Senators	8862
2. Redbirds	8641
3. Red Sox	8357
4. Blues	8166
5. Reds	8045
6. Skipjacks	7984
7. Tigers	7799
8. Chiefs	7563
9. Cubs*	7477
10. Bronx Bombers	7383
11. Tribe	7363
12. Pirates	6970

### NOTABLES

League MVP, Larry Walker	833
Cy Young, Roger Clemens	720
Top hitting - week, Red Sox	284
Top hitting - year, Blues	5451
Worst hitting - week, Reds	117
Worst hitting - year, Pirates	4425
Top pitching - week, Tigers	196 <sup>4</sup>
Top pitching - year, Senators	3678
Worst pitching - week, Tribe	39

<sup>4</sup> Once again, this is not a typo, just a year-end anomaly.

Worst pitching - year, Tigers 2359  
Luckiest bastard in league - week, Rube  
Luckiest bastard in league - year, Rube

## AROUND THE HORN

◆ The best news of the month for the *Senators* is that the Big Unit is back, apparently in good form. And although I have already over-managed my team to death, let's hope a little bit of restraint these next two weeks will pay dividends and my players will return to their earlier-season form. Here's hoping for lots of singles, doubles and triples, and let's leave the long ball to the Pirates and Tribe.

◆ The *Redbirds* continue to flourish, for reasons not understood by this writer. When will this team of overachievers led by the Ombudsman of Overachievement, Larry Walker, finally give up the ghost? Apparently not until they have passed up the Senators, or at least taken the nerve-racked Skipper into the bottom of the 9th. If I see one more \*&\$#@!\*&%\$# highlight featuring Sandy Alomar, Jr. or Omar Vizquel, I'll be on the next bus to Cleveland with a sniper rifle, disguised as Indians mascot Chief Na-Mik-Na-Amuk.

◆ The *Red Sox* picked up precious little ground on the Redbirds during Week 24, despite the monster Wednesday night that Possum had by two hitters, Olerud and Ivan Rodriguez. For those of you who didn't hear from Possum personally (and if you didn't, it was only because you didn't return *his* call), Olerud hit for the cycle and knocked in five runs while Rodriguez went yard three times (twice against my beloved Brad Radke), totaling 129 points (including the 80 bonus points) between them for the night. This is the first time by my recollection that one team has had two such bonus events the same day. Despite this undeserved charity, the Red Sox could only muster up something like 155 points for the day and a respectable but not exactly historic 365 points for the week. Take away Olie and Ivan's big night and the Sox would have been chiming in at 230-something for the week.

Perhaps the fact that Mike Stanton was the Red Sox's top pitcher for the week (with 32 points) is telling.

◆ McBlunder's *Blues* continue to hold their steely grasp on 4th place, in an understated (what else would you expect?) campaign by McBlunder for his best-ever HSL finish.<sup>5</sup> With two weeks to go in the season, the Blues have expanded their lead over the 5th-place Reds to 121 points, giving the Elongated One some much-deserved breathing room. No offense to his competition, but Go Blues!

◆ The *Reds* have been unusually quiet of late, hovering in the middle of the pack with recent weekly point totals. Is Magpie satisfied with a 5th-place finish, or will his Reds put on a late-season charge to challenge McBlunder's Blues?

◆ The *Skipjacks* have shown some impressive resilience this season, battling back from what can at best be termed a mediocre draft to all but lock up the final spot in the upper division. Note that Itchie's best hitter for the week was Edgardo Alfonzo, while Tom Gordon again topped the Skipjacks' staff for the week. The Itchmeister has gotten more mileage out of Tom Gordon and Curt Schilling this year than from his best-selling primer on credit card salesmen one-liners.

◆ How about that *Tiger* pitching? Just when you thought this team was headed for a season-end 8th- or 9th-place finish, Big Guy is rescued by Mark Clark and Company and appears likely to stave off the Chiefs' September mad dash to the finish line.

---

<sup>5</sup> Big Mac tied for 4th place with Magpie in 1995, and is looking for an undisputed 4th-place spot this year so he can avoid another losing coin flip for draft position.

◆ And speaking of the *Chiefs*, despite a lousy Week 24 in which his team's top hitter was Carlos Delgado and top pitcher was Jerry Dipoto (although the latter is not likely to repeat itself next week, after Jerry's bruising — minus 15 points — the other night by Bobby Bo and the Marlins), the Chiefs remain safely in 8th place, and still harbor a hope, though dimming, of catching the Tigers. A lower-division finish seems all but assured for last year's champion.

◆ The *Cubs*\* continue to have a pulse, though you wouldn't know it by looking at their league leaders for Week 24 (David Segui, 27 hitting points; Terry Adams, 37 pitching points). With a well-balanced 164 hitting and 161 pitching points for Week 24, the Cubs\* chalked up a respectable sum of 325 points, enough to keep Shamu's\* team firmly in 9th place.

◆ How 'bout those *Bombers*? Buoyed by yet another team-leading performance by an ex-Senator (Juan Gonzalez, 29 hitting points), the Bombers have rebounded nicely from their recent scoring woes, and surged past the slumping Tribe on the strength of a 371-point performance in Week 24. Picking up nearly 200 points on the Tribe for the week, the Bombers hold a 20-point edge on U-belly's warriors with two weeks to go.

◆ Which brings us to the *Tribe*. What is with this team? Despite the monumental amount of time and effort that U-belly has put into managing his charges, the Tribe seems destined to finish in the penultimate position. You will remember my earlier comments about the atrociousness of this team's pitching staff, although hotly denied by U-belly. With a total of 39 pitching points for the week and Tim Wakefield leading the way with 23 points in Week 24, has my point been made?

◆ And no issue of *FTB* would be complete without a few digs at the last-place team, the long-suffering *Pi-*

*rates.* Talk about a team running hot and cold. I cannot remember a team which had more 400+-point weeks, followed by sub-200-point weeks, followed by 400+-point weeks. On the plus side, Gary Sheffield is arguably finally living up to his draft position, leading all Pirates hitters for the week. On the minus side, the slug had only 27 points for the week, nothing to write home about for an alleged superstar. How many rounds do you suppose would have to pass before SloPay would ever draft the Shef again?

## INDIVIDUALS

### HITTING LEADERS

1. Larry Walker	793
2. Mike Piazza	706
3. Ken Griffey, Jr.	703
4. Nomar Garciaparra	677
5. Craig Biggio	668
6. Frank Thomas	648
7. Jeff Bagwell	634
8. Edgar Martinez	623
9. Tino Martinez	622
10. Andres Galarraga	614

### PITCHING LEADERS

1. Roger Clemens	694
2. Pedro Martinez	663
3. Greg Maddux	616
4. Darryl Kile	590
5. Randy Johnson	586
6. Curt Schilling	585
7. Denny Neagle	575
8. Jeff Shaw	525
9. Kevin Brown	516
10. Mike Mussina	499

## BALLS AND STRIKES

Just a couple this week:

➤ How about David Wells threatening to punch out the Boss? Enclosed is a copy of the article in Tuesday's *USA Today* regarding the Wells-Steinbrenner feud. I'm no fan of George, but I'm on his side on this one.

➤ Did anybody catch Erickson's nice performance for the Senators last week-

end? Gives up 9 runs and 12 hits, and doesn't make it out of the 3rd inning. Negative 25 points. Not quite up to a Wellsian performance, but damn, that one hurt me, Scotty.

➤ I'm still reeling over the Jeff Shaw trade to Mouse. The guy now has 38 saves, and is the 8th highest-scoring pitcher in the league among all pitchers.

I think he has more saves in the last two weeks than the Cincinnati Reds had games, or at least it seems that way. If the Senators blow this thing, I'll be spending the better part of the off-season analyzing and ragging about Mr. Shaw and the Reds, you can count on that.

➤ How can Mo Vaughn say that he is "insulted" at the Red Sox' 8.5 million per, multi-year contract offer? McGwire just signed for something roughly comparable and the guy is coming off back-to-back 50-plus HR seasons, and puts a whole lot of fans in the stands. Go ahead and test your worth in the free agent market, Mo.

➤ As a foretaste of what you might be reading about in next week's issue, last night my stellar pitchers (Erickson, Schmidt and Belinda) went 0-and-3 and moonwalked the Senators backwards to the tune of 29 points. On the other hand, the Crimson Chirpers put together a 72-point night, to leap and bound ever closer to the Senators. The last eleven days of the season may very well put me in St. Joseph's Center for Mental Health.

➤ And lastly, does anybody have any information about Underbelly's current employment or whereabouts? Repeated phone calls and messages to his homestead indicate a vacuum of information there. *Bob? I'm not sure where he's working these days. But I think he's working.* If you're still alive and receive this issue from your helpful family, please give me a call.

Later.

Skipper