



FROM THE BULLPEN

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*Our
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Issue*

SENATORS VICTORIOUS

And the winner of the 1997 Hot Stove League championship is — drum roll, please — the **SENATORS!** The season is over, the point totals are in, and the Senators claimed their second Hot Stove League championship, their first since 1990, and first ever in the post dead-ball era. Another chapter in the storied if at times beleaguered Senators franchise. Another inscription on the hallowed chalice, The Cup.

For at least the next six months, anyway, the Senators are the **HOT STOVE LEAGUE CHAMPIONS.** Top of the heap. King of the hill. A-Number One. Victorious. Top Banana. Champions. And above all, humbled by the process.

WEEK 26

During the final week of the 1997 campaign, the Senators managed to score just enough points (234) to not only finish atop the HSL standings with 9484 points, but also to earn the distinction of finishing in the top 15 of all BJFB teams, a measly point behind the 14th place Ohio Shoeless Joes of the Ernie Banks league. Never mind that the 14 teams that finished ahead of me probably all participated in

15-team leagues, the HSL has one of its own on the final leader board.

And now, without further ado, I give you the final HSL standings for 1997:

1. Senators	9484
2. Redbirds	9210
3. Red Sox	9104
4. Blues	8816
5. Skipjacks	8563
6. Reds	8536
7. Tigers	8426
8. Chiefs	8140
9. Cubs*	8029
10. Tribe	7972
11. Bronx Bombers	7906
12. Pirates	7604

For the record, Jim Ed and his Crimson Chirpers finished in the bridesmaid spot for the third consecutive season. More on his woes to come in future issues of *FTB*, but for today the spotlight belongs to the Senators.

The much-reveled Red Sox rallied during Week 26 to nail down the third and final money position, besting the Blues by a cool 288 points. Congratulations to Possum for his second finish in¹ the money in the last three years, after a long dry spell in the Hot Stove League. Deepest sympathies to McBlunder, who

after a valiant campaign fell just short of a first-ever finish in a money position, in this his 11th Hot Stove League season.

And as for the rest of you, to borrow from a bit of baseball lexicon, these are

¹I am only able to utter these words by virtue of the fact that the Senators finished ahead of the Red Sox.

the saddest of possible words: *There's always next year.*

WEEK 26 TOTALS

1. Red Sox	402
2. Pirates	332
3. Tribe	275
4. Reds	271
5. Chiefs	268
6. Bronx Bombers	268
7. Skipjacks	260
8. Tigers	256
9. Redbirds	255
10. Blues	233
11. Senators	231
12. Cubs*	172

NOTABLES

League MVP - Larry Walker, Redbirds	902
Cy Young - Roger Clemens, Red Sox	772
Top hitting, week - Red Sox	229
Top hitting, year - Blues	5967
Top pitching, week - Pirates	154
Top pitching, year - Senators	3934
Worst hitting, week - Senators/Cubs*	130
Worst hitting, year - Pirates	4759
Worst pitching, week - Blues	15
Worst pitching, year - Chiefs	2596
Top hitter, week - Lee Stevens, Blues	
Top pitcher, week - David Wells, Redbirds	52

Due to time constraints but also to allow this Senatorial victory to be savored for a few weeks, we will reserve further commentary on the 1997 season until another issue or issues.

Next week: *How the West Was Won.*

Thanks for a great season, brothers.