

# FROM THE BULLPEN

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Issue*

## BOMBERS BLAST INTO LEAD: WELL(S) DONE, MOUSE

The story of Week 7 is, of course, the Bombers' claiming of the league lead for the first time since June 18, 1995, on the strength of David Wells' perfect game on Sunday. More later on that. However, lest you should think that Mouse's rise to the top was no more than a big fat fluke, know this: Even without the 92-1/2 points for Wells' Perfecto, the Bombers would still be in the lead by a hair. As it stands, the Bombers hold a fairly comfortable 120-point lead over the 2nd-place Tigers.

And speaking of the Tigers, led by red hot Mark Grace (59 points for the week) and staff ace (ugh) Pat Rapp (36 points), the Tigers squad fashioned a huge point total for the week (467 points) to pounce into 2nd place, just ahead of the Blues.

At the other end of the continuum, the Pirates parlayed a minus 8 pitching performance to a league-low overall total of 211 points for the week to claim the cellar position from Tricky's Reds. The Red Sox, with a second consecutive pathetic week, slipped into 10th place with 2054 points, and Possum is reputed to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown as he looks sweatily into his rear view mirror.

From top to bottom, here are the team standings through seven weeks:

## WEEK 7 STANDINGS

1. Bombers	2560
2. Tigers	2440
3. Blues	2423
4. Senators	2384
5. Chiefs	2356
6. Skipjacks	2329
7. Redbirds	2301
8. Cubs*	2198
9. Tribe	2078
10. Red Sox	2054
11. Reds	2000
12. Pirates	1946

The Bombers, with a monster weekly total of 487 points, established the weekly season high for the league, and the 7th highest HSL weekly total of all time. The Tigers, with 467 points, posted the second highest weekly total in the league. And with twin 57-point performances from leading hitting Brian Jordan and leading pitcher Kerry Wood, the Crimson Chirpers posted a 406-point week to crawl within 28 points of a spot in the Upper Division.

Week 7 totals were:

## WEEK 7 TOTALS

1. Bombers	487
2. Tigers	467
3. Redbirds	406
4. Skipjacks	389
5. Tribe	382
6. Chiefs	377
7. Reds	348
8. Senators	323
9. Blues	321
10. Cubs*	312
11. Red Sox	269

12. Pirates 211

Mark McGwire of the Tigers is the league MVP with 256 points, while Curt Schilling remains the Cy Young leader with 243 points.

Top hitter for the week was the Tigers' Mark Grace with 59 points, just ahead of the Redbirds' Brian Jordan with 57. Top pitcher of the week was the corpulent David Wells with 121 points for the week, in all likelihood an all-time HSL single week high. The second best pitcher for the week was the Chiefs' Todd Stottlemyre, who posted an impressive 60 points in his two starts.

The top hitting team for the week was the Tigers with 276 points, and for the year, the Tigers batters lead the way with 1633. The fewest hitting points for the week were posted by the Senators with 161 points, while the Tribe batters trail the pack for the year with 1203 hitting points.

The top pitching team for the week was, of course, the Bombers with an eye-popping 283 points. Note that even without David Wells' 121, the Bombers pitchers posted a respectable 162 points, which is nothing to sneeze at. For the year, the Bombers now lead all pitching staffs with 1080 points. At the other end, the Pirates' minus 8 pitching points for the week was the lowest in the league, and a new low-water mark for the year. For the season, however, the Red Sox hurlers continue to have the distinction of fewest points scored with 484 points.

## INDIVIDUAL TOTALS

### Top Hitters

1. Mark McGwire	256
2. Chipper Jones	229
3. Alex Rodriguez	222
(T) Ivan Rodriguez	222
5. Andres Galarraga	204
6. Derek Jeter	199
7. Ken Griffey, Jr.	199
8. Vinny Castilla	197
9. Juan Gonzales	193
10. Craig Biggio	186
11. Moises Alou	184
12. Barry Bonds	182
(T) Darrin Erstad	182
14. Bret Boone	181
15. David Justice	180

### Top Pitchers

1. Curt Schilling	243
2. Pedro Martinez	201
3. Tom Gordon	200
4. Greg Maddux	189
5. Robb Nen	180
6. Trevor Hoffman	173
7. Todd Stottlemyre	170
8. Ramon Martinez	162
9. Aaron Sele	159
10. Kevin Brown	157
11. John Wetteland	156
12. Jeff Shaw	155
(T) Andy Ashby	155
(T) Mike Hampton	155
15. Brett Tomko	151

## WHO WOODA GUESSED

Before the season started, who would have guessed that:

- Rookie phenom Kerry Wood would become an immediate impact player, setting a National League record by striking out 20 batters in his fifth major league game.
- That the highly imperfect David Wells would pitch a perfect game.
- That the Bronx Bombers would be leading the league at any point this season.
- That the Bombers, Tigers and Blues would be in the top three money spots, jockeying for the league lead; while the Reds and Red Sox are fighting it out with the Pirates to avoid the league bowels.
- That Larry Walker, last year's MVP and all-time HSL point man, would be the 30th-highest point scorer through seven weeks

with only 163 points (last year at this time he had a total of 297 points through seven weeks).

- That Eddie Taubensee of the Senators would have more points (174) than Mike Piazza (151) of the Red Sox.
- That El Gato would have the fifth highest hitting total overall with 204 points, after moving from hitter-friendly Coors Field to pitcher-hostile Turner field.
- That the Tigers' Tom Gordon, a 17th-round throw-away pick, would be the top reliever and third best pitcher overall with 200 points.
- That Greg Vaughn would put in a ferocious bid for Comeback Player of the Year, now that he is off the Tribe roster (actually, Underbelly could have predicted this).
- That Walt Weiss would have more points (142) than Nomar (128) through seven weeks.
- That Matt Stairs would have more points (158) than Frank Thomas (154).

## THE PERFECT GAME

Leave it to the world of major league baseball to provide the oxymoron of David Wells and Perfection. Can you imagine anyone more unlikely than Mr. Unmade Bed to toss a spectacular perfect game with 11 strikeouts? Keep in mind that this is the same David Wells that just last September got into an expletive-filled faceoff with George Steinbrenner, which produced the following exchange between George and David:

Wells: "If you don't like you, you can trade me."

To which Steinbrenner said:

"Believe me, I would, but no one wants your fat ass."

And that's a quote.

And it's the same David Wells who was mentioned just last week in *FTB* as the pitcher whose excruciatingly-bad mega-negative-point outing was recently exceeded by my own Jose Mercedes. A glance at last year's August 19th *FTB* issue reminds us that David had a three-inning, 10-hit, 11-earned-run loss for the Redbirds last season, yielding a minus 29 point output for the 'Birds.

Moreover, there is the irony that Wells' masterpiece inures to the benefit of Brother Mouse, in that:

- Wells pitches for the Yankees, and Mouse is a diehard Yankee fan.
- Mouse has a son whose first name is *Wells* (wow, that's a scary coincidence).
- Mouse's Bronx Bombers were the last HSL team to have a pitcher throw a perfect game for them, Kenny Rogers' gem in July 1994 which produced 90 points for the Bombers and lifted them into 8th place.
- David Wells is the only caucasian major leaguer besides John Franco to sport an earring, and Mouse has a good friend named Shamu\* who is caucasian and has always dreamed of wearing an earring.
- Mouse has a secretary named Lincoln, and David Wells has a secretary named Kennedy.

Kidding aside, it was a heckuva performance by young Orson, whose blatant disregard for his own health and appearance continues to draw Steinbrenner's ire. Maybe this masterful performance is just what Wells needs to get his house in order, and he will start living up to the potential that people have been remarking about for years.

One last note on Wells. Perhaps some of you saw the article in the paper the day after his perfect game, in which it was reported that Yankee pitching case Mel Stottlemyre went down to the bullpen to watch Wells warm up prior to his perfect game. Apparently, Wells had such a crisp fast ball and sharp curve during warmups that when Stottlemyre returned to the dugout to report to Torre on Wells, his only comment was, "Wow." I love it. What a great piece of baseball lore.

## BALLS AND STRIKES

➤ And speaking of perfect games, do any of you know anyone who has actually seen one? If not, give me a call and I will be glad to regale you with my happy tale.

➤ I understand that at least three different players put in for journeyman slug pitcher Mark Portugal. I guess desperate times call for desperate measures.

➤ Rumor has it that Possum has been

burning up the phone lines trying to palm off two or three of his slug reserves for a top line player. Apparently there is a bit of tone of panic in Possum's voice when he calls, which has done nothing for his bargaining position. To date, no one has taken the bait.

➤ Bible beaters or union slackers? I don't exactly know why, but I do know this: Almost every week, without fail, the Senators will be clicking along with a decent-to-superb week in the works, with 320 to 350 points in the jar *through Saturday*. Then, with expectations high as a kite, the Senators players roll over and die on *Sunday*, leaving me with an average if not subpar week. Case in point: Last week. Through the first six days of the week, the Senators amassed 322 points, leading me to believe that I had a chance for a 400-point week, but certainly would score at least 350-360 points for the week. Instead, my twelve starting hitters put together a collective total of: 44 at-bats, 3 runs, 6 hits, 0 doubles, 0 triples, 0 HR, 1 RBI, 4 BB, 0 SB, 1 CS, 2 errors, 4 DP, for a total of 1 positive point. With this disappointing Sunday finish, the Senators were only able to muster up 323 points for the week, 8th best in the league. On the 7th day they rested.

## TRIP UPDATE

The Trip to Coors Field for the All-Star Game July 6-8 is still a "go," although we are finding that tickets to the game and the home run contest could be extraordinarily pricey. We are continuing to contact our resources, and will report back to you ASAP.

## COMING UP

Next week's issue of *FTB* will be a special treat for all of you, as Underbelly will serve as guest author and regale us with his views on the World according to Bob. We've assembled a team of proofreaders and editors to help Underbelly with his work this week, and *From the Bullpen* takes responsibility (a nonnegotiable term of contract with Mr. Hurlbut) for any and all typographical errors or other mistakes.

Those of you who have been around the league awhile know what a treat you are in for with this offering from our unofficial but certifiable league curmudgeon. For those of you who don't, here's what others have been saying about him:

*He had us in stitches.* Post-Op Recovery, Presbyterian General Hospital

*His homespun humor is reminiscent of Will Rogers.* New York Daily News

*I laughed, I cried, and then laughed some more!* Rex Reed

*Great Caesar's ghost, he's funny. If only he could spell!* Perry White

*Speaking of bad fish, is that Possum's pitching staff I smell?* Anonymous  
(sorry, I couldn't resist)

*Take my wife, please!* Henny Hurlbut

Give us your best shot, Bob.

Skipper