



# From the Bullpen

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The Hot Stove League  
Eastern Nebraska Division  
1998 Season

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## JIGGERNAUT JINX FELLS BLUES, BOMBERS BLAST INTO LEAD

McBlunder's Blues fell prey to the HSL version of the *Sports Illustrated* jinx as the Blues free-fell out of the lead even as the *Jiggerernaut* predicted a Blues title in '98. With a paltry 248 points for the week, the Blues watched helplessly as the Bombers posted a 395-point week to capture the league lead through 12 weeks with 4353 points. Through 12 weeks, the league standings are thus:

### STANDINGS THRU 12 WEEKS

1.	Bombers	4353
2.	Blues	4321
3.	Senators	4288
4.	Chiefs	4200
5.	Tigers	4153
6.	Skipjacks	4024
7.	Cubs*	3956
8.	Redbirds	3885
9.	Reds	3763
10.	Red Sox	3723
11.	Tribe	3677
12.	Pirates	3518

The weekly best was posted by the heretofore underachieving Senators, who are starting to hit their stride after posting a 243-point hitting, 193-point pitching, 436-point total week. This Week 12 performance allowed the Senators to hop past the flagging Chiefs (322 points) and dog-paddling (290 points) Tigers team to recapture the third position.

Apart from the aforescribed shuffling in the top five, Itchie's Skipjacks used a 413-point week to vault over the Cubs\* into the upper division, and the Reds used a 375-point performance to surge past the sorrowful Red Sox, who are soon to lay claim to the penultimate spot in the standings.

### WEEK 12 TOTALS

1.	Senators	436
2.	Tribe	428
3.	Skipjacks	413
4.	Bombers	395
5.	Reds	375
6.	Cubs*	346
7.	Chiefs	322
8.	Red Sox	305
9.	Redbirds	296
10.	Pirates	292
11.	Tigers	290
12.	Blues	248

## BESTS AND WORSTS

Despite a dearth of home run activity by Big Red, McGwire continues to pace the HSL hitters with 472 points, still well ahead of his closest challenger.

The top hitter for the week was Sammy "Say It Ain't" Sosa, with 109 points. Funny that Sammy couldn't find that home run stroke while he was on the Senators roster last year. The top pitcher for the week was the Tribe's new ace, Bartolo "Irritable" Colon.

The top batting team for the week was the Bombers with 300 points, while the flaccid Tigers trailed the league with 152. The top pitching team for the week was the Tribe with an astounding 274 points, or about twice what this pitching staff is actually capable of. Ironically, Underbelly's other team, the Pirates, had the worst pitching performance for the week with a gooseegg.

### TOP HITTERS

1.	Mark McGwire	472
2.	Sammy Sosa	395
3.	Alex Rodriguez	384
4.	Ken Griffey	364
5.	Chipper Jones	352
6.	Juan Gonzalez	350
7.	Ivan Rodriguez	340
8.	Andres Galarraga	337
(T)	Jim Thome	337

10. Craig Biggio	332
11. Greg Vaughn	330
12. Darren Erstad	325
13. Rafael Palmeiro	308
14. Mo Vaughn	306
(T) Barry Bonds	306
(T) Vinny Castilla	306

## PITCHING LEADERS

1. Greg Maddux	366
2. Curt Schilling	337
3. Robb Nen	334
4. Tom Gordon	309
5. Andy Ashby	288
6. Pedro Martinez	286
7. Kevin Brown	280
8. Al Leiter	278
9. Rick Reed	273
10. Trevor Hoffman	272
11. Bartolo Colon	254
(T) Ugueth Urbina	254
13. Todd Stottlemyre	253
14. John Wetteland	248
15. Troy Percival	239
(T) Pete Harnisch	

## FOUL TIPS

☞ Chirpers: It's pretty sad when Mike Stanley is your top ten-day point-getter. This team's future is in the past.

☞ Tigers: So the Tigers *aren't* a one-man team? When Big Mac goes cold, this team is a rudderless skiff in the middle of the ocean. There's clearly a lower division finish in this team's future.

☞ Blues: Poor McBlunder. On top of the world one week, in the depths of despair the next. Will the curse of the Itchmeister keep this team from its first-ever HSL title. Yup.

☞ Chiefs: When Mike Lieberthal is your top hitter for the week, you darned better well have one heckuva pitching staff. Congrats on snapping up former Chief castoff Royce Clayton, who obviously was not exactly on the top of anyone's shopping list last Sunday.

☞ Bombers: When Sammy reverts to striking out three times a game instead of blasting three taters, will Bags and Bone be there to pick up the slack? Or are the Bombers a mere pretender to the throne?

☞ Cubs: When Mark Gardner is your best pitcher for the week, with 15 points, it's time to start returning Possum's phone calls for trade proposals.

☞ Reds: Along with his Fruit-of-the-Looms, the Reds are slowly but surely starting to sneak up on the rest of the league's lower division. If the Big Hurt, Robbie and Derek heat up, this team could rise as high as, say, 6<sup>th</sup> place. And by the way, enjoy newest Red Jose Valentine and his daily flirt with the Mendoza line.

☞ Tribe: With Shawn Bergman, Brian Molar, Arthur Rhodes, Mark Leiter, Terry Adams and Billy Taylor in his pitching majors, how on earth did U-belly coax 274 points out of this pitching staff last week? Some Internet skulduggery by the computer-savvy spielmeister? Or more likely, dumb, blind luck? And congratulations on snapping up the ever-popular Carl "The Truth" Everett in last week's free agent draft. I can't believe SloPay didn't snap him up first.

☞ Redbirds: Look in the dictionary next to "hurt" and "locker" and catch Rube's grimacing mug. Apparently this team really *is* as bad as it seems.

☞ Pirates: Carlton Loewer, Carl Pavano, Shane Reynolds, Mike Sirotko, Darryl Kile, Jeremy Gonzales, Darrin Dreifort, Ramiro Mendoza, and Jerry Dipoto. And these are his *starting* pitchers. I am able to say without equivocation that if Denny called up and offered all nine of these pitchers for Bob Tewksberry, I'd have to think long and hard about it. Nah.

☞ Red Sox: Looks like that 3<sup>rd</sup> round pick of Chan Ho Park is working out well for you, Possum. But don't change a thing. Remember, we're all counting on you to finish in the basement this year, and with the Pirates being what they are, you've got your work cut out for you.

## A PERFECT SUMMER NIGHT

Notwithstanding Brother Itchie's none-too-subtle dig at me for devoting too much space in *From the Bullpen* to Senatorial happenings (hey, it's *my* newsletter. I'll write what I damn well please. If you don't like it, cancel your subscription!), I will share with you here the happy story of the Senators' perfect summer night, last Wednesday, June 18.

This fateful day began on a very auspicious (or is it inauspicious, Shamu\*?) if not sour note. I was awakened by the sound of two screaming banshees, both of whom had been awakened by the early morning thunderstorms. Getting these restless natives back to sleep was no mean feat, and by 5 a.m. I had a pounding, sleep-

deprivation headache as I reached for the fax machine to check on the barometer of my day, the morning's BJFB report. Instead of the immediate lift brought about by a 75-point performance from Tuesday evening's games, my tired eyes were met with the news of a net four-point performance from the Senators, including a minus 12 mug-bashing from Tyler Green. My gloom deepened.

From there, my day got no better. After taking my medicine from Bill James, I further fouled my ill mood by sitting down at my desk to pay the usual monthly bills and my quarterly tax estimates. I cursed aloud at Uncle Sam and those damn spendthrift Republicans for taking my hard-earned money, and then bounced around the old cranium a few silent thoughts about the spending habits of my pampered, bon-bon eating, charge-card toting wife, who lay peacefully in bed above me, no doubt dreaming of more ways to dissipate my early retirement income.

My mood hardly improved as I arrived at my office, only to find my desk cluttered with paperwork, memos, projects, and phone calls to be returned. I drove to Lincoln for a luncheon meeting with a client, only to find out upon my arrival that this busy client was too busy to meet with me and would have to reschedule. I then returned to Omaha for what I thought would be a two-hour deposition, which turned into a six-hour marathon lasting until 8 p.m.

I continued to work up a head of steam as I drove home, quite sure that instead of a juicy steak, frothy beer, and obedient wife and children to pamper me, I would instead be faced with garbage night, diaper-changing, bathtimes, bedtime roundup, and a diatribe from you-know-who about how lucky I have it not to be a stay-at-home mom. I was right.

And now about my perfect day. At 9:38 p.m., I popped open a cold one, sat my butt down at the kitchen table, and flipped on *Baseball Tonight*. I saw highlights of Maddux's complete-game, no-earned-run win, Kenny Rogers' quality win, Rolando Arrojo's quality win, Jeff Montgomery's quality save (he now has *one* of those for the year), Mo Vaughn's big night, Nomar's big night, and a smattering of goodies from the rest of the bunch.

What more needs to be said? A perfect day. I went to bed a happy, content man, without a damn care in the world.

Let's face it. For a Hot Stove Leaguer, there's no news bad enough that a three HR game from Sammy Sosa can't turn your mood around. But on the other hand, there's no event that is happy enough that it can't be quashed

into nothingness by a blistering minus 15 or 20 point performance by a gas-soaked reliever. Such is the life of the fantasy league player.

And now, if you're all still with me, let me share with you the fax that was waiting for me on Thursday morning, possibly the best morning of my entire life:

Eddie Taubensee	4
Scott Brosius	1
Mo Vaughn	17
David Segui	5
Damion Easley	2
John Valentin	-2
Nomar Garciaparra	12
Tom Goodwin	0
Scott Rolen	7
Luis Gonzalez	7
Paul O'Neill	4
Jason Giambi	-4
Brian L. Hunter	4
David Dellucci	1
Jose Guillen	-2
Kenny Rogers	25
Greg Maddux	33
Troy Percival	12
Jeff Montgomery	12
Jason Christiansen	8
Rolando Arrojo	<u>25</u>
Total	168

To put it in perspective, the Senators' 168-point night was four points more than the Cubs\* scored the entire previous week. A new benchmark for greatness in this league. Congratulations are still being accepted at the above address.

## CLOSING UP SHOP

Plaudits to Itchie for his hilarious, home-hitting issue of *The Jiggernaut* last week. How are you sitting for next week's newsletter?

Later.

Skipper