



FROM THE BULLPEN

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CHIEFS CHARGE PAST TIGERS, TAKE LEAGUE LEAD; GUTSY SENATORS RIDING OUT STORM

Brethren:

Riding the crest of a league season-best 474-point week, the **Chiefs** blew past the sliding **Tigers** like they were running in opposite directions, assuming a 70-point (2636-2566) lead through seven weeks of play. Led by a sweltering Mike Lieberthal (50 points) and the overachieving Jose Lima (48 points), the **Chiefs** reclaimed the lead after letting Big Guy's **Tigers** play pretend champion for four straight weeks. With a boatload of *en fu-ego* pitchers and Sammy just starting to simmer, the Chiefs appear to be the team to beat, at least for the moment.

WEEK 7 STANDINGS

1. Chiefs	2636
2. Tigers	2566
3. Cubs*	2485
4. Skipjacks	2446
5. Pirates	2384
6. Reds	2356
7. Red Sox	2244
8. Tribe	2239
9. Blues	2229
10. Redbirds	2197
11. Bombers	2151
12. Senators	2040

The **Cubs*** held on to their 3rd-place spot, barely staving off the red-hot **Skipjacks**, the latter who posted an impressive but undeserving total of 408 points for the week. One has to wonder if the **Skipjacks** can keep this up, what with their talent-shy pitching staff and ne'er-

do-well manager who changes jobs more frequently than his underwear (and I would know – I roomed with him on the Trip). Yet, as pointed out recently by the paranoid owner of the **Cubs**, Itchie's Big Three (Albert Belle, Vinny Castilla, and Jim Thome) are yet to catch fire, and this trio can make up for plenty of pitching sins if that ever happens.

The **Blues'** embarrassing slide toward oblivion continued in Week 7, with the hapless defending champions mustering up only 256 points for the week, second worst in the league, to slide on down the fire pole another notch or two to land in the 9th position. I'm not sure the Hot Stove League has ever before seen such a precipitous plunge by a team, which only two or three weeks ago was firmly in contention in 2nd or 3rd place.

WEEK 7 TOTALS

1. Chiefs	474
2. Tribe	448
3. Redbirds	408
(T) Skipjacks	408
5. Pirates	379
6. Red Sox	360
7. Reds	352
8. Cubs*	341
9. Bombers	281
10. Tigers	276
11. Blues	256
12. Senators	187

Top hitting team for the week, Tribe	376
Worst hitting team for the week, Blues	178
Top pitching team for the week, Pirates	185
Worst pitching team for the week, Senators	4
League MVP of the year, Jeff Bagwell, Cubs*	263
Cy Young of the year, Pedro Martinez, Bombers	279

BALLS AND STRIKES

⌘ I would be remiss if I did not point out here that there may have been a rush to judgment on the fate of the **Tribe** and **Redbirds** who have used this as a motivator for their players. Both teams have been as hot as hot can be, and both posted whopping 400-plus point totals for the week to leap-frog the **Senators** and the **Bombers**. The fact remains that these teams have positively dreadful pitching staffs, and the toll of an entire season will show soon enough.

⌘ With his team on a meteoric rise upward, Itchie had plenty to flap his gums about in his recent issue of *The Jiggernaut*, a fact not lost on *FTB*. The balding one's day of comeuppance will come, sooner rather than later.

⌘ I am amazed by the **Pirates'** dogged determination to stay in the Upper Division, and possibly even to compete. SloPay hasn't been this high, this often since his senior year of high school, when he did more weed than the cast of *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*.

⌘ U-belly truly does believe that pitching means nothing in this league. How else can one explain his recent drafting of Hideous Nomo, Scott Karl, and Dwight Gooden. Quite an addition to an already stellar staff, the ace of which is Woody Williams with a sparkling 11.7 PPG average. Of course, as long as the **Tribe** continues to crank out 376 hitting points a week, they'll stay far ahead of the **Senators**. The **Tribe's** hitting total for Week 7 more than doubled the **Senators'** total for Week 7 or 187 points. What's a mother to do?

⌘ Posted on my bulletin board for all time is Tuesday morning's sports page headline: *Glavine Shelled in Record Time by Milwaukee*. As if I need a reason *not* to ever draft Glavine again. This odious performance was the last straw for me as far as Tommy-boy is concerned, and if anyone can package up a deal for Glavine that includes any living, breathing player, it will be given due consideration.

⌘ Last year at this time, believe it or not, the **Bombers** were leading the way with 2560 points, while the **Pirates** were bringing up the rear with 1946 points. Hmmmm. Maybe I really am kidding myself about the **Senators'** prospects for vaulting through the standings to catch the **Chiefs**.

That's it for this issue. See you next week.

Skipper