



# FROM THE BULLPEN

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## CHIEFS WOBBLE TO LEAD, SKIPJACKS' PITCHING STAFF FALTERING, CUBS\* AND TIGERS BATTLING FOR 3<sup>RD</sup> MONEY SPOT

Brethren:

The battle for supremacy in the 1999 HSL race has turned into a donnybrook, with the **Chiefs** and **Skipjacks** neck-and-neck for the pole position. With exactly two weeks to go in the season, the Chiefs hold a razor-thin 9-point lead on the 'Jacks, with Itchie's boys maintaining a 38-point lead in the projected point totals. At this point in time, it is anybody's ballgame.

During Week 24, the league leaders both struggled, the Chiefs mustering up the mediocre total of 302 points to barely edge the Skipjacks and their 286-point total for the week. Through 24 weeks, the Chiefs maintain an 8858-8849 lead over the Skipjacks, a 9-point margin which can disappear quickly.

The standings through 24 weeks are as follows:

### WEEK 24 STANDINGS

#### Upper Division

- |              |      |
|--------------|------|
| 1. Chiefs    | 8858 |
| 2. Skipjacks | 8849 |
| 3. Cubs*     | 8717 |
| 4. Tigers    | 8661 |
| 5. Reds      | 8575 |
| 6. Senators  | 8007 |

#### Those Other Guys

- |             |                   |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 7. Pirates  | 7954              |
| 8. Redbirds | 7903              |
| 9. Tribe    | 7760 <sup>1</sup> |

<sup>1</sup> Since the **Tribe's** cap-induced free-fall is occurring even as you read this, and because U-Bob's precipitous drop in the standings is as certain as the sun rising in the east, for purposes

- |             |      |
|-------------|------|
| 10. Red Sox | 7662 |
| 11. Blues   | 7459 |
| 12. Bombers | 7233 |

## RANCID REDBIRDS RUN AMUCK

The leader in points scored for Week 24 – gasp, sound of jaw dropping – was Rubella's rancid **Redbirds**, who, thanks to Greg Vaughn and company, mustered up a total of 496 points for the week, easily leading the league. With this last-minute burst of energy, the 'Birds bellicose owner, the Irascible Iowagean, actually thinks that he has a chance to maneuver his craft into an Upper Division spot by year's end. Little does he realize that his squad's temporary good fortune is merely partial compensation for being an Iowa Hawkeye fan living in the state of Nebraska, and intended to provide some measure of solace for backing a miserable pack of misfits that started the season by getting crushed by the Huskers and then embarrassed by the cross-state rival Cyclones. Oh, the shame of it. Anyway, don't get your hopes up too high, Rubella. You are destined for a Lower Division finish this year.

The other red-hot teams during Week 24 were the **Tribe**, with 421 points, and the **Tigers**, with 408. The Tribe's success for the week has merely served to buoy the hopes of poor U-belly, whose forthcoming plummet will be faster than a roll of jelly doughnuts sliding down Shamu's\* esophagus and into the holding tank. Starting about today, the only offensive categories that the Tribe will be getting credit for will be triples, catcher wins, and catcher caught stealing points. The Tribe may score fewer points this week than B.T. and Junior Miller each scored in their third stab at the SAT. Ten.<sup>2</sup>

of the Week 24 standings, *FTB* chooses to use the Tribe's projected instead of actual points to more accurately reflect the reality of the situation. If anyone disagrees with this methodology, call your local Congressman.

<sup>2</sup> Which is what you get for showing up that day.

Anyhow, here are the week 24 point totals from top to bottom.

### WEEK 24 POINT TOTALS

1. Redbirds	496
2. Tribe	421
3. Tigers	408
4. Pirates	388
5. Bombers	343
6. Cubs*	332
7. Red Sox	331
8. Reds	318
9. Senators	312
10. Chiefs	302
11. Skipjacks	286
12. Blues	183

### FOUL TIPS

☞ The foulest tip I can think of these days is the one that somebody gave to B.T. – possibly Gilligan, his confidante and yes-man – to trade Greg Vaughn to the Iowegian. Not only may this trade seal the fate of the **Chiefs** to finish behind the **Skipjacks** or even the **Cubs\***, but it has given new life to the once rigor-mortic **Redbirds**, who are creeping up on the Upper Division like a bad pair of McBlunderwear. I'm sure that it won't happen, but if the Redbirds somehow manage to grease their way past the **Senators** by year's end, I vow to refer to the Vaughn debacle in each and every issue of *FTB* in perpetuity. I mean it.

☞ Poor McBlunder. His pathetic, anemic squad could muster up only 183 points for the week, pushing him ever closer to that First-to-Worst distinction.

☞ I note that the **Skipjacks'** top hitter for the week was Jason Veritek with 48 points, and his top pitcher Jamie Moyer with 49. Holy smokes! Talk about pulling out all the stops. In a similar vein, U-Bob's top hitter for the week was Jeff Cirillo with 51 points, and his top pitcher Woody Williams with 47. Positively frightening.

☞ In my venom-laced report on the **Senators** all-dung team last week, I failed to mention one of my very favorites: Andrew Jones. Andy averaged a sparkling 0.8 PPG last week while contributing a total of 5 points to the cause, as his batting average dwindled down to .267 in this, the year of the hitter. Why didn't somebody tell me this boo was a one-tool player? I want to say that he is a Senator never-ever, but I may have to borrow a chapter from the **Pirates'** book and draft him once more just to insure a prompt and fitting end to his miserable major league career.

☞ Tom Glavine averaged a nifty minus 0.5 PPG while contributing a net total of minus 1 to the **Senators'** cause in his two outings last week. Looking at last Sunday's paper, this gutless, spineless, pampered alleged superstar had given up more hits (240) than any other pitcher in the majors this year. Wait a minute. Didn't this guy win, like, the Cy Young or something last year? Mother of God.

☞ Through 24 weeks of the season, Brian Giles only had 4 fewer points than Ken Griffey, Jr., and was averaging 4.6 PPG to Griffey's 4.4. Giles must certainly be considered a contender for the Pig-in-a-Poke award of 1999. How fitting for Magpie.

☞ Some guys take this silly little game a little too seriously. Rumor has it that Brother Shamu\*, desperate to eradicate the asterisk next to his name, was checking weather reports in Chicago the other day to find out if the wind would be blowing *in* or *out* so he would know whether to promote two of his pitchers for a starting outing at Wrigley. With the weather report indicating wind blowing in, Shamy\* promoted Jon Lieber and Kent Bottenfield. For about six innings of Lieber's outing against the Cards, Shamu\* was looking like a carrot-topped Albert Einstein, as Lieber pitched a perfect first six frames. But then former Cub player and current Cub antagonist Mark McGwire stepped to the plate and showed all the world that whether the wind is blowing in or out at Wrigley matters very little to him, and deposited a Lieber offering deep onto Waveland Avenue. Sparked by his effort, McGwire's fellow Cards jumped on the bandwagon and sent Lieber to the showers with a 6-spot on the board and his tail between his legs. Nice try, Shamu\*, but next time consult your Ouija board instead.

☞ On Sunday, September 20, with only two weeks to play in the season, six teams in the Hot Stove League accounted for 38 different transactions, including the signings of such free agent buzz saws as Deivi Cruz, Dave Weathers, Tony Eusebio, Dave Mlicki, and Gil Meche, among others. One word of advice, fellas: Relax! It's only a *fantasy* league.

### GOLF

Is still a go for October 1, a week from this Friday. Woodland Hills, noonish (exact time to be announced), and bring your A game with you.

Skipper