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# THE BELLYFLOP

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Allan Brady, my boss, called me into the office the other day and said, “Mel, you boob. How many times do I have to tell you ‘pitching is everything, aren’t you ever going to learn?’” Well, I might be a boob, but I’m no idiot. So I snapped off a quick “Yes, sir,” and scurried back to my job as the head ink displacement technician at Art F/X. I must have had a worrisome look on my face because Trang Nguyen, one of my many Vietnamese co-workers, said I looked a little bit down. So I proceeded to try to explain to him our Bill James Baseball League and the point system.

“Let me see if I understand this right,” Trang said. “You’re upset because you drafted a great hitting team and, because of the hitting caps that Bill James implemented, it caused you to lose a few places in the final rankings. You said you understand the reasoning behind the caps, that it levels the playing field for the smaller market teams, like the Omaha Senators that didn’t draft a very competitive hitting team. And you’re really upset that during the last week of the season, the 6-RBI night that Vladimir Guerrero enjoyed was for naught, and that you would have loved to see the look on Dante Bichette’s face as he crossed home plate after his second homer of the night just to be met by a representative of the Bill James Fantasy League to inform him that they simply ‘didn’t count.’ What was suppose to be a mirror of actual baseball is, in essence, more reflective of city league softball, where after the third home run, they become outs. But, in theory you should have been able to make up some of the ground on some of the other teams after they hit the pitching point caps, but since there are only three or four pitchers worth their salt, that the chances of four pitchers winning over 116 games and being on the same team are virtually nil?”

“Yeah, that’s essentially it, I said.

“So to win this thing you must excel at mediocrity while feeding off the bad luck and misery of other teams.”

“Yep.”

“Wow, it sounds like Lawyers and corporate moguls would be good at it.”

“You would think so, my friend. You would think so.”

“Well, it doesn’t get any worse than that.”

“Sure it does, I could of caddied for six of them.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Editor’s comment: Wow! Now that’s stubborn. Response to follow.

