



# FROM THE BULLPEN

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## WEEK 5: SKIPJACKS OWNER DECLARES "IT'S OVER"

Brethren:

Just five weeks into this young HSL season, the cocky pilot of the defending champion *Skipjacks* has uttered the inflammatory statement seen above, collectively slapping the rest of us across the chops. Even though it was a mere week ago that the Skipjacks slipped past the *Chiefs* to assume the lead, and even though the Skipjacks' cushion over the Chiefs is a not-so-comfortable 65 points, the braintrust of the Skipjacks organization obviously thinks that he has the wherewithal to withstand the inevitable challenges that his team will face during the rest of the season. There are twenty-one weeks remaining in this year's campaign, I will remind him.

Itchie may of course refute the making of this statement, but there are ample witnesses (all twelve members of Joe and Zack's Marlins team, who were no doubt impressed when Coach Thielen started spouting off about his team—they are under the impression that he owns a *real* major league baseball team), and we all know Itchie's deniability quotient. If it's a credibility contest with Itchie, I'll take my chances.

In any event, the Skipjacks are in fact leading this thing after five weeks, and the previous league leader, the Chiefs, suddenly look quite vulnerable, if not ordinary.

Here are the standings and point totals through and for Week 5:

### STANDINGS THRU WEEK 5

	<u>Team Name</u>	<u>Total Pts.</u>
1.	Skipjacks	2010
2.	Chiefs	1945
3.	Wahoos	1900
4.	Reds	1794
5.	Bombers	1742

	<u>Team Name</u>	<u>Total Pts.</u>
6.	Tigers	1678
7.	Senators	1676
8.	Blues	1662
9.	Tribe	1612
10.	Redbirds	1522
11.	Pirates	1504
12.	Cubs*	1447

### WEEK 5 POINT TOTALS

	<u>Team Name</u>	<u>Pt.Total</u>
1.	Wahoos	502
2.	Skipjacks	476
3.	Reds	368
4.	Blues	348
5.	Redbirds	343
6.	Cubs*	327
7.	Bombers	319
8.	Senators	315
9.	Pirates	312
10.	Chiefs	280
11.	Tribe	234
12.	Tigers	229

The league MVP of the year through 5 is A-Rod with 214 points, edging past the torrid Todd Helton, the linchpin of the *Wahoos'* powerful offensive machinery. The Cy Young of the year is Randy Johnson with 223.5 points, and the coverboy for this week's *Sports Illustrated* issue. Don't worry, B.T., I'm sure that the *SI* jinx is only a myth, and that the Big Unit will continue to flourish in spite of it. I'm just glad it didn't happen to one of *my* players.

Since there wasn't an issue of *FTB* last week, let's briefly revisit here the standings and point totals through and for the fourth week of the season:

## STANDINGS THRU WEEK 4

	<u>Team Name</u>	<u>Total Pts.</u>
1.	Chiefs	1665
2.	Skipjacks	1534
3.	Reds	1426
4.	Bombers	1423
5.	Tigers	1407
6.	Wahoos	1398
7.	Tribe	1378
8.	Senators	1361
9.	Blues	1314
10.	Pirates	1192
11.	Redbirds	1179
12.	Cubs*	1120

## WEEK 4 POINT TOTALS

	<u>Team Name</u>	<u>Pt.Total</u>
1.	Bombers	517
2.	Senators	486
3.	Skipjacks	435
4.	Pirates	433
5.	Chiefs	418
6.	Reds	379
7.	Tribe	361
8.	Tigers	328
9.	Blues	315
10.	Cubs*	297
11.	Wahoos	286
12.	Redbirds	222

## BALLS AND STRIKES

➤ The *Wah-Wah-Wahoos* are absolutely kicking tail in the hitting department, leading the Universe with 1468 batting points, well ahead of the second-best *Reds* with 1315. Note, however, that the Wahoos are already projecting to lose more than 100 points because of the hitting caps, and this is not likely to improve as time goes on.

➤ The *Cubs\** hitters are trailing the field with a woeful total of 990 points. The only hot hitters in the *Cubs\** lineup are riding pine, most notably Matt Lawton. Why Matt is still in the minor leagues with more than 100 points to date is mystifying, at best. What strategy is Brother Shamu\* employing, anyway?

➤ The *Chiefs* still have the top pitching staff in the league through five weeks with 735 points. However, the *Skipjacks*, led by Pedro and Denny Neagle, have dramatically closed the gap with 704 points. The *Se-*

*natros* pitching arms have cooled a bit, but still check in at third with 609 points.

➤ The worstest pitching staff in the league, and possibly in the continental United States, belongs to—no jaw-dropper here—the *Tribe*. With top starter Chuck Finley getting roughed up his last few outings, and with Jeff Shaw's recent drubbing, things have not looked good for the Tribe, whose staff has totaled a mere 316 points for the year. The *Pirates* arms are not a lot better, able to muster up a total of only 321 pitching points to date.

➤ If anybody has first and second round draft picks who are off to a more miserable start than the *Senators* tandem of Jeter and Alomar, you'll have to prove it to me. Okay, Hayden, you're in the running with Millwood and Hampton, but you got what you deserved, and I didn't. Jeter's on a current 0-for-about-20 schneid, and Alomar routinely checks in with a 4-0-0-0 or 4-1-1-0. Add third round pick Trevor Hoffman and fourth round pick Juan Gonzalez to the mix, and you can see that the Senators had one heckuva first four rounds this year. If the Big Four ever heat up, my team might actually make it into the Upper Division this year.

➤ The *Bronx Bombers* finally showed us what can happen in one week when you have Bagwell and McGwire both on your squad. During Week 4, the Bombers broke loose for a whopping total of 517 points, tops in the league. If Vinny Castilla and Jeromy Burnitz ever get it going, this team could actually be in the hunt this season, in spite of what still looks like a pathetic pitching staff on paper. Oddly enough, the Bombers pitchers have the fourth highest point total with 580, largely on the corpulent back of David Wells.

## THE TRIP

Is a go, go, go for June 3-4. Bully! We leave Omaha at 6:30 a.m. on Continental, arrive in Houston at 8:50 a.m., and return Sunday night leaving Houston at 8:34 p.m. and arriving in Omaha 10:44 p.m. If somebody thought that the *24 hours of LaMans* was tough, they should try the *36 hours of Houston with Tony* drill. I've already got my reservation with the Eppley Treatment Center for the morning of June 5. Detox City.

## IN CLOSING

That'll do it for this issue. Keep working that free agent wire.

Skipper