



FROM THE BULLPEN

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Eastern Nebraska Division

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**SENATORS VAULT INTO 5th;
 BLUES MANAGER SINGING THE
 BLUES;
 CHIEFS READY TO FOLD UP TEEPEE;
 REDS AND SKIPJACKS LOOKING OVER
 SHOULDER AT CRIMSON CHIRPERS;
 TIGERS AND BOMBERS ENGAGED IN TANDEM
 FREE-FALL;
 CUBS* CIRCLING WAGON AGAINST TRIBE ATTACK;
 PIRATES CELLAR FINISH NOW A CERTAINTY;
 WAHOOS ABOUT TO CLAIM TITLE**

Hey boys,

In case you hadn't noticed, we are now in the middle of the last week of the 2000 campaign, with very little maneuvering room to advance up or down the totem pole. With an evaporating but still ample 203-point lead over the **Reds**, Possum's **Wahoos** figure to break the tape next Sunday with a step or two to spare on the field. The more interesting battle is the one going on for 2nd and 3rd places, with Itchie doggedly pursuing Tricky for the bridesmaid position, and Tire-biter nipping and yapping at the **Skipjacks'** rear tire for the final money spot in the standings.

Here are the Week 25 standings:

STANDINGS THRU WEEK 25

	<u>Team</u>	<u>Total Pts.</u>
1.	Wahoos	9070
2.	Reds	8867
3.	Skipjacks	8722
4.	Redbirds	8632
5.	Senators	8550
6.	Blues	8550
7.	Chiefs	8485
8.	Tigers	8072
9.	Bombers	9020
10.	Cubs*	7634
11.	Tribe	7536

	<u>Team</u>	<u>Total Pts.</u>
12.	Pirates	7430

On the strength of a league-leading 402-point week, the **Senators** pulled themselves up from the depths of Lower Division despair and into the glorious light of the Upper Division, eclipsing both the **Chiefs** and the **Blues** along the way. The cream always rises, but sometimes it just takes a little longer than others. Finally, I can shake off the shame and stigma of being associated with those unwashed and unrefined Lower Division types.

POINT TOTALS FOR WEEK 24

	<u>Team</u>	<u>Total Pts.</u>
1.	Senators	402
2.	Reds	388
3.	Tribe	318
4.	Redbirds	311
5.	Skipjacks	274
6.	Wahoos	254
7.	Cubs*	238
8.	Pirates	234
9.	Blues	231
10.	Chiefs	209
11.	Bombers	201
12.	Tigers	191

BALLS AND STRIKES

- If one just looks at the point totals above, one has to conclude that the point caps are beating the tar out of several of the league teams. On the other hand, the **Tigers** and the **Bombers** can't really blame point caps for their woes during Week 25, given the narrow spread between their totals and their projected totals. Just a couple of bad teams finally settling down to their own level, I guess. But not for the lack of trying, at least on the part of Brother Mouse, I should hasten to add.

- Tricky is trying his darnedest to make a race of this thing, churning out 388 points during Week 25 to narrow the gap with the **Wahoos** by 134 points. Unfortunately for

Tricko's boys, it's going to be too little, too late. Barring some seriously punitive outings by Possum's pitchers, the **Reds** have too much ground to make up and too little time.

- How 'bout that **Tribe**, ain't they somethin'? No doubt spurred by his tart comments in the recent *Bellyflop*, the Tribesmen are playing their best ball of the year and have their sights set squarely on the **Cubs*** and a 10th place finish. If only the season were a couple of weeks longer, the **Tigers** and the **Bombers** would also be in danger of a Tribal assault, but as it stands, it looks like 10th place is the best that U-Bob could ever hope for this Summer of U-Belly's Discontent.

- It's a good thing that Tirebiter is finishing the season on a high note in the Hot Stove League, since his other major sporting love, college football, is nothing but a House of Pain for T.B. this season. With his beloved Squawkeyes playing completely over their heads against the nation's #1 team, they still came up on the short end of the stick by—let's see, was it four touchdowns? Tirebiter can do all of the Couda-Wouda-Shouda-ing that he wants, but the cold hard fact of the matter is that his team still lost by 29 whopping points on an off day for the mighty Huskers. If Big Red had been clicking on all cylinders, it could have been a trouncing on the order of the Huskers' 84-7 pummeling of the Minnesota Gophers during an earlier era. Count yourself lucky, Tirebiter.

- I see that Sunday night was a very busy night for shoppers in the free agent draft. Some interesting and

unusual strategies. Such as Scott's drafting of Tim Belcher, who is known to belch up on himself and his owner even when in the midst of a winning skein. True to form, last night the Belchmeister took a beating and walked the **Chiefs** backwards by a couple of giant steps, not quite erasing but taking a good deal of the luster off of the Big Unit's positive-point win that same evening.

As for my own strategy on Sunday night, I picked up as many warm bodies who will either be likely to start two times this last week, or who may have multiple outings as a Middle Reliever. It's a recognized gamble. They may either do swell and bump me up closer to Tirebiter and Itchie, or they may break out the jet fuel and flint rocks and start an inferno of epic proportion on their respective pitching mounds, converting them into figurative funeral pyres signifying the end of the **Senators'** brief, oh so brief, occupancy in the Upper Division. But the way I see it, you might as well lay it all on the line this time of year. Next season is a long ways away.

FRIDAY LUNCH

We will gather Friday at 11:30 a.m. for our annual tribute lunch to the leader at the fish joint at One Pacific Place, L&N Seafood. Please R.S.V.P. one way or the other. See you then.

Good luck in the final days of the campaign.

Skipper