



---

---

# FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of The Hot Stove League

Eastern Nebraska Division

2000 Season      Edition No. 20

Tuesday, October 24, 2000

---

---

Brethren:

It may be a little bit surprising to receive a second postseason issue of *From the Bullpen* so soon after last week's tribute issue to Possum's<sup>1</sup> **Wahoos**. Truth be known, I didn't quite have the chance to get all of my thoughts on paper concerning the 2000 season by the time the last issue was scheduled to go to press, so I decided to put out this follow-up issue to give you all the opportunity to have the full benefit of my thoughts. There will be no charge for this extra issue, it's on the house.

The first part of this issue is being dictated as I travel east on Highway 30 in western Pennsylvania, amidst the splendor of the fall colors of this hilly and scenic part of the state. You can't imagine a prettier drive. Not only that, but I'm retracing the historic trip that B.T., his brother Ziggy, some cop named Randy, and I made back in 1992 as we journeyed from Baltimore to Pittsburgh to see our first-ever game at Three Rivers Stadium. The only differences are that the drive that year was in April when the trees were green; and that most of that drive was made wearing thick beer goggles, courtesy of the friendly and omnipresent beer vendors at Baltimore's old Memorial Stadium and then at Three Rivers. Come to think of it, maybe that 1992 journey was on Interstate 70 and not Highway 30, but details aren't really important to me when I'm waxing nostalgic. Today I'm clean and sober, it's daylight, and it's a darned pretty drive. Enough said.

## How Possum Won

---

<sup>1</sup> In the Truth Is Stranger Than Fiction Department, I dictated the word "Possum's" at almost the split second that I passed a sign for *Possum Hollow*, Pennsylvania, while driving across western Pennsylvania on my way to Altoona. Coincidence, or some sort of strange affirmation of my role as league scribe? Don't know.

But I digress. Back to business. As I look at Possum's championship team in 2000, I realize that Possum won this thing this year, plainly and simply, from Round 7 to Round 14, the Ho-Hum part of the Draft for many. Take a look.

In Round 7, Jeff Kent. An absolute steal. Kent finished with 795 points, 115 more than his nearest competitor at the keystone sack, Jose Vidro (*You Are a Friend of Mine?*).

In Round 8, Possum selected Professional Hitter Edgar Martinez. Grand larceny. What were the rest of us thinking? Ed finished with 695 points, more than Rafael Palmeiro, more than Jim Thome, more than Mo Vaughn, etc., etc.

In Round 9, Possum held his nose and picked up Gary Sheffield, Professional Pariah. Even though he played in only 141 games and tailed off at the end, Sheffie still finished with 655 points, fourth best among all left fielders, and not all that far behind co-point leaders Dan Erstad and Barry Bonds (718 points). Must have been Possum's calming influence on people that turned Sheffie around.

In Round 10, Possum picked up Kevin Appier, whom I personally wouldn't have picked even if available in Round 26, but who still finished up with a fairly respectable 253 points, only about 50 fewer than first-round pick Kevin Millwood.

In the 11<sup>th</sup>, Possum culled Roberto Hernandez from the quarry, who finished tied for fifteenth among all relievers with 368 points, more than John Wetteland, more than Troy Percival, more than Jeff Shaw.

Possum's biggest heist came in Round 12 when he picked up Jim Edmonds, to the stunned silence of the other eleven league members, who suddenly realized that he was still available. Playing for a new team and a new manager, Jimmy had an MVP-type season and finished with 657 points, third among all center fielders.

In the next round, Lucky No. 13, Possum pulled the Blind Pig of the Year selection with Jeff Hammonds of the

---

---

Rockies, who had a monster year (for him) and chalked up 510 points in a mere 122 games, averaging well over 4 points per game.

And finally, Possum picked up relative newcomer Troy Glaus in the 14<sup>th</sup> Round just in time for his break-out season. Glaus finished the season with 652 points, only 1 behind position leader Chipper Jones. Coupled with his fortuitous selection of Phil Nevin in Round 22 for Nevin's career best season, Possum was able to parlay Glaus into the blockbuster trade for Tom Glavine.

And that, my friends, is how the House of Possum was built on Draft Day in year 2000.

Take-Home Point 1: Keep your eye on the ball after the glory rounds of 1 through 5 are completed, and don't get your dobber down even if you cough up on yourself by taking slugs like Shane Reynolds and Ugie Urbina in the first five.

Take-Home Point 2: Sit as closely to Possum as possible during the middle rounds, and stretch those neck muscles during your predraft warmup, employing Shamu's\* time-honored drafting technique.

Amazingly, Possum picked such a stellar hitting team during the initial Draft, whether by design or Divine Providence, that he was able to practically ignore the Free Agent Draft this season, picking up virtually no plums in this manner through the course of the season. You don't believe me? Take a look.

### Possum's Free Agent Drafts

In the first Free Agent Draft on Sunday, April 9, Possum signed Todd Stottlemeyer, Andy Benes, Rafael Furcal, and Lee Stevens, none of whom contributed squat to his team.

In the second Free Agent Draft one week later, Possum picked up Ryan Dempster, Livan Hernandez, Eric Gagne, and Brian Moehler. Picking up Dempster, who finished with 401 points for the year, was instrumental in beefing up a feeble Wahoos pitching staff, but Moehler was released a week later, and Possum made a major judgmental blunder in pulling the trap door on Livan two weeks later, opening the way for the Senators to pick him up for the balance of his stellar (402 points) season. Gagne was a non-event.

In the third FAD, Possum picked up Glendon Rusch and Jason Christiansen, slugs both.

In FAD 4, Possum drafted Brian Anderson and Kelly Stinnett. Anderson stuck, Stinnett did not.

In week 5 of the Free Agent Draft, Possum picked up Travis Lee and Steve Kline. Picking up Kline didn't hurt, but he finished with a mediocre 297 points as Possum's closer.

After bypassing the Free Agent Draft for the next three weeks, in FAD 9 Possum signed Pat Meares, and the following week dumped him off in favor of Mike Sirotko, who finished with a respectable 334 points.

And that was basically it for Possum's Free Agent Drafts. Possum did not pick up anyone in the drafts following Weeks 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22 and 24. Along the way, he picked up Mark Kotsay, Bret Boone, Darrin Fletcher, Mike Timlin, Ismael Valdes, Bob Wells, Bill Mueller and Adam Kennedy, all of whom contributed little or nothing to the Wahoos' cause.

In sum and substance, Possum won this thing on Draft Day, and through his trades of Bernie Williams and Troy Glaus for Tom Glavine (with the Senators), and Sheffie, Edgar and Roberto Hernandez for David Wells and Mr. Kim (with the Bombers). End of story.

### Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda

When I look at how Possum won this thing in the middle rounds, and in particular, in Rounds 7 through 9, I can't help but muse about how other teams, including the **Senators**, would have done with some more proficient middle-rounds drafting. In Rounds 7 through 9, I picked up Tim Hudson, Dustin Hermanson, and Johnny Damon. Hermanson stunk, of course, but I can't really complain about Hudson and Damon. However, seeing as how I drafted J.D. Drew, Roger Cedeno, Tony Clark, Todd Walker and Juan Pena in Rounds 10 through 14, I can kick myself black and blue in the shins when I look at how things might have been if I hadn't suffered my transient ischemic accident (stroke) during these five rounds.

In an effort to spread this misery around, I note that **Underbelly** picked up Jeff Shaw, Ismael Valdes, Rick Ankiel, Jose Canseco, Matt Stairs, Paul Konerko, Eric Chavez and Pat Hentgen during Rounds 7 through 14. Enough said.

**Big Guy's** middle-round selections look no better, with Kerry Wood in the 7<sup>th</sup>, followed in order by Jay Bell, Erubiel Durazo, Luis Gonzales, B.J. Surhoff, Doug Glanville, Eric Milton and Randy Velarde. Yuck.

For the **Pirates**, it was Jason Varitek, Robin Ventura, Greg Vaughn, Chris Benson, Mike Sirotka, David Bell, Kevin Young, and Brady Anderson. Ugh. Now we know why they finished in last place.

And for **Mouse**, it was Russ Ortiz, Vinny Castilla, Magglio Ordonez, Jeff Zimmerman, Jeromy Burnitz, Ray Lankford, Pokey Reese, and Scott Williamson. Throw out Magglio, and there's not much there.

Rounds 7 through 14, boys. Be there.

### FREE OPINIONS

In my professional life, there is no such thing as a free opinion. When it comes to baseball, however, I've got lots of opinions, and they're all free of charge.

#### Best and Worst First Round Picks

Best: Pedro Skipjacks  
Worst: Millwood Redbirds

#### Best and Worst Middle Rounds Picks

Best (T): Jim Edmonds (11) Wahoos  
Jorge Posada (18) Bombers<sup>2</sup>  
Worst (T): Omar Dahl (6) Pirates  
Ismael Valdes (8) Tribe

#### Best and Worst Late Rounds Picks

Best (T): Richard Hidalgo (23) Senators  
Darryl Kile (21) Chiefs  
Worst: Pick-Em

#### Best Pick Any Round

Hidalgo, by the Senators.

#### Worst Pick Any Round

This one's easy: Jose Lima (3), Tigers<sup>3</sup>

#### Best Free Agent Pickup

I'll get back to you on this one.

#### Worst Free Agent Blunder

<sup>2</sup> It could be argued that **Mouse's** selection of Posada in the 18<sup>th</sup> was the steal of the Draft. Jorge had a bust-out year, finishing with 632 points, just 18 points behind leader Mike Piazza. Wow. Put Jorge on my roster instead of Ben Pe-trick (also taken in the 18<sup>th</sup>), and the **Senators** win this thing and the **Bronx Bombers** are elbowing the **Pirates** for a spot in the cellar. And to think I had Posada slated on my draft list as about an 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> round pick. Really, I did!

<sup>3</sup> Though **Big Guy** still loves him, just not in the way you're all thinking.

Tie: U-Bob's release of catcher Charles Johnson (539 points, fourth best among catchers) in the second (I think?) or third Free Agent Draft.

Skipper's release of Charles Johnson (see above) in a later Free Agent Draft.

Second Runner-Up for this distinction goes to Possum for ditching Livan just before he caught fire, although it was a move that obviously made no difference in the end.

### MORE NUMBERS

#### First Round Picks Points

Team	Player	Points	RAP <sup>4</sup>	OR <sup>5</sup>
Skipjacks	P. Martinez	731	1	9
Chiefs	R. Johnson	669	2	18
Cubs*	Kevin Brown	580	4	DK <sup>6</sup>
Tigers	A-Rod	844	1	2
Reds	Greg Maddux	581	3	DK
Pirates	Garcia-parra	665	2	19
Senators	Derek Jeter	616	4	DK
Tribe	Junior Griffey	588	5	DK
Redbirds	K. Millwood	305	38	DK
Blues	Mike Mussina	419	11	DK
Wahoos	Mike Piazza	650	1	DK
Bombers	Jeff Bagwell	767	4	6

#### Top 20 Point-Scorers, Rounds Taken

Name	Team	Points	Rnd.
Todd Helton	Wahoos—1B	859	4
Alex Rodriguez	Tigers—SS	849	1
Jeff Kent	Wahoos—2B	795	7
Carlos Delgado	Redbirds—1B	778	4
Frank Thomas	Reds—1B	769	8
Jeff Bagwell	Bombers—1B	767	1
Jason Giambi	Blues—1B	746	7
Sammy Sosa	Pirates—RF	740	3
Pedro Martinez	Skipjacks—P	731	1
Darrin Erstad	Chiefs—LF	718	14
Barry Bonds	Skipjacks—LF	718	3
V. Guerrero	Blues—RF	705	3
Brian Giles	Reds—RF	701	4
Edgar Martinez	Wahoos—1B	695	8
Jose Vidro	Pirates—2B	680	17
Edgar Alfonso	Reds—2B	677	3
Richard Hidalgo	Senators—CF	675	23

<sup>4</sup> Rank at Position.

<sup>5</sup> Overall Rank.

<sup>6</sup> Don't know.

Randy Johnson	Chiefs—P	669	1
Garciaparra	Pirates—SS	665	1
Andrew Jones	Blues—CF	664	5

### Individual Awards

In case I failed to mention it, Todd Helton was the league MVP this year with 859 points. Pedro Martinez was the league's Cy Young with 731 points. Barring injury, Pedro will certainly be Possum's first overall pick in next year's draft. The fact that he is a Red Sock won't hurt. As to Todd Helton, so long as he stays with the Rockies, he is most assuredly a first round pick, but whether he goes in the top six or to a Lower Division dreg remains to be seen.

### DUGOUT DRIVEL

❖ The new ballpark in Pittsburgh looks to be well on schedule for Opening Day 2001. Howzabout a junket there for our 2001 Trip? Or is it going to be Milwaukee, or San Francisco? Take your pick. Any of the three would be a wonderful experience.

❖ Roger *wasn't* trying to hit Ol' Fish Eyes with the broken bat. Period. If he was, do you really think that he would have missed, the way he was throwing that night? Shut up, McCarver.

❖ Who saw El Duque fan Bordick and retire the Mets in the 6<sup>th</sup> of Game Three with no damage, after juicing the bases with no outs? The guy is positively fearless. Hated to see him lose his first postseason game after going 8-and-0.

❖ Amazing how every Western Pennsylvanian I saw on my trip resembled all of the guys in the movie *Deerhunter*, and mostly have names like *Wojnosck*, *Wacjohncck*, and the like. Must be kinfolk of Stretch. And by the way, I still don't see how he gets "blon'-za-wick" out of Blongewicz.

❖ Having driven in and through Johnstown, PA, I can now understand how it was so ravaged by the Great Flood of 1889. The place is built in the bottom of a damned toilet bowl, with no place for flood water to go except up the sides. Why the heck did John build his town there, anyway? Something to ponder.

❖ If Derek Jeter is becoming the new "Mr. October" for his World Series batting prowess, poor Bernie Williams is going to get the reputation of being "Mr. April." After whiffing pitifully the other night with the bases loaded—I think it was toward the end of Game

Three—they flashed a stat on Bernie's World Series woes. At that point, the poor guy was 8 or 9 for 63 or 64, far below the *Mendoza Line*. No wonder Possum ditched him off to me after his hot start.

### A POSSUM PARTY

Like it or not, I guess we need to have a postseason fete for Possum, and the only questions now are when and where. Big Guy has suggested getting together for the Colorado game the day after Thanksgiving, if the guest of honor and most of the rest of you slugs are available. Since the only way that most of us will ever make our way into the Possum Mansion are as unpaid servants at a Possum-Love-In for his Zillionaire clients<sup>7</sup> and/or Upper-Crust Happy Hollow socialite friends, Big Guy has suggested a gathering at the Scorecard, or whatever it is called now, or some other such place with a big screen TV. Any thoughts, suggestions or preferences? Come to think of it, maybe Itchie's hospitable better half would be willing to host the event again this year, even though we are not paying homage to Itchie, so long as we all bring our checkbooks and buy hundreds of dollars of gypsy jewelry from her. Itchie, please take this up with her and let us know.

In any event, we'll be in touch with a date, time and location.

Enjoy the rest of the World Series, if it's still going on when you receive this issue of *FTB*. A true Fall Classic.

Your mentor, soulmate, and friend

Skipper

<sup>7</sup> Only those with at least 8,000,000 shares of Bridges Investment Fund shares—I've got 11—are eligible to attend.

