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# THE JIGGERNAUT

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I sit here on February 27, watching it snow straight sideways under that same beautiful, uplifting gray sky that I've been staring at for 120 straight days. There is a wind chill of -11 outside, and there is literally no end to this bleakness in sight. As I absorb all this cheer, I ask myself once again: Why in the hell would anybody live in this Godforsaken state?

This is an especially relevant query when one considers that at this very moment, there are slimy credit card salesmen playing golf on courses in Hawaii; there are buxom, bikini clad women lying on a beach in California; and there are men playing **baseball** in Arizona and Florida. Alas, it is the latter that brightens my despair and gives me hope that an end to these doldrums is near. In only three short weeks, after completion of the draft and the official formulation of the Skipjax 2001 roster, my life will once again have meaning. Let's Play Ball!

I must say I was somewhat surprised when the official league hack asked me to pen a *Jiggernaut* this week. It's a bit early in the game for me to start formulating thoughts to share with the rest of the league. Hell, I haven't even been to the Amoco station yet to pick up a baseball magazine, although I plan to execute on that strategy on or about the morning of March 24.

But there are times in one's life when certain events prompt a reaction and we are compelled to share that reaction with others. This is one of those times. After reading last week's *From the Bullpen*, I was enamored with the #1 sanction to be imposed on the Devil (nee Possum) for his catastrophic social faux pas:

*Can't be surprised if he hears eleven of the worst excuses imaginable on Draft Day as to why none of us remembered to bring our payoff money.*

My immediate reaction was to poll the other league members if they indeed thought that the Devil's "dissing" of not only the league members but their spouses as well was so egregious that they would actually withhold funds from him which, according to the league by-laws, he is rightfully entitled to receive.

To a man, the league members said "We ain't coughing up the dough." (U-belly actually wrote "Eye ain't coffin up da doe.") Some offered excuses as to why they can't pay; others have just elected to funnel their funds elsewhere; but the consistent theme would have made Johnny Cochran proud:

*If the Devil don't show, he don't get the dough.*

*If the Possum's a stiff, he don't get a whiff.*

*If we don't hear his prattle, he gets no chattel.*

Not only were the league members adamant about their position on this matter, they all agreed to be quoted as to their specific reasoning for not paying or their alternative plans for the money. I now share with you:

### **The Top 11 Reasons Not to Pay Ted At This Year's Draft**

- Desperately need the money to fend off past due notices from the caterer at "the gala that never was." -- **Mouse**
- *Sick relative* needs the funds to pay off the free clinic for gout surgery. -- **Underbelly**
- Three words: Horn, High, Yo! -- **Tirebiter**
- More prudent to use the money to "dollar cost average" shares of Level 3 at \$120, \$110, \$100, \$90, \$80, \$70, \$60, \$50, \$40, \$30, \$26. -- **Stretch McGloat**
- Major mix-up / communication problem with my wife on the amount of the league entry fee. -- **Curby** (Oops, have you heard that excuse before?)
- One hundred dollars could buy 20 buffets at Valentino's; that's 60 days of meals if your backpack is big enough. -- **Shamu**
- Better used to engrave Ted's nameplate at the Liar's Hall of Fame. -- **Skippy**

- Could use money as down payment on sixth SUV. -- **Baby Trumpetfish**
- Amoco was out of Money Orders on Saturday morning of draft. -- **Itchie**
- Need it to pay for rare bottle of French Beer won on e-Bay auction. -- **Big Guy**
- Look at my league moniker and figure it out, you fools! -- **SloPay**

My sincere thanks go to each of you for your willingness to go "on the record" in this matter.

While I understand that the Devil is furious over the league's solidarity on this matter, and has engaged the services of Hugh Rodham to lobby the "powers that be" in an effort to collect his proceeds from the kitty, I have an alternative proposal to put the matter to rest once and for all:

*If Ted attends the league trip to Milwaukee, he is entitled to his money as the 2000 regular season Champion of the Hot Stove League.*

*If Ted fails to attend the league trip to Milwaukee, the money reverts to the **official** 2000 Hot Stove League Champion, Curby.*

That's going to conclude this issue of *The Jiggernaut*. See you on Draft Day, boys, and don't forget to bring your casino coins!

Itchie