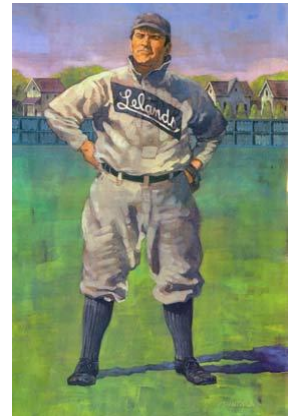

FROM THE BULLPEN

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2001 Season

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PIRATES IN FIRST

Oh, quit rubbing your eyes like you just saw a *Truman Defeats Dewey* newspaper headline, or an *Arafat Cedes Holy Land to Jews* header, or something truly unbelievable like *Shamu Refuses Seconds* or *Foster Thielen Waves Off an Ice-Cold Beer*. It not only *could* happen, it *did* happen: The **Pirates** found themselves in 1st place in the league after the second full week of play, and enjoying a 795.5 to 760-point margin over the 2nd place **Wahoos**.

It's a sure sign that the apocalypse is upon us. Natch the ordinarily-**Irate Pirate** is elated about holding the early lead in the league, and has not yet thought much about the precipitous drop he will experience when the point cap trap door is pulled out from under him, mid-July. For now, it's enough for our Slo friend to be fat, dumb and happy. No offense intended.

Here are the

Week 2 Standings

1. Pirates	795.5
2. Wahoos	760.0
3. Cubs*	744.0
4. Senators	734.0
5. Redbirds	730.5
6. Tribe	692.0

Lower Division

7. Reds	678.5
8. Bombers	626.5
9. Tigers	597.5
10. Skipjacks	550.5
11. Blues	505.0
12. Chiefs	424.5

The **Pirates** hitters lead all teams in hitting with a staggering 603 points, more than the overall totals of the bottom four teams. The sorry **Chiefs** hitters, with a paltry 239 points, trail the pack by a wide margin.

The top pitching team through two weeks is the **Cubs***, still led by the Hideous One with 124 points. The incredibly stinky **Blues** pitching staff, led by no one and going nowhere, trails the field with a hurtful total of 166 points. In a league where pitching is everything, a guy like Stretch is in the hurt locker for sure.

Week 2 Point Totals

Here are the point totals for the second week of the season:

1.	Pirates	376.5
2.	Tigers	357.5
3.	Tribe	348.0
4.	Redbirds	342.5
5.(t)	Reds	342.5
6.	Wahoos	340.0
7.	Senators	329.0
8.	Bombers	305.5
9.	Cubs*	301.0
10.	Skipjacks	271.5
11.	Blues	254.0
12.	Chiefs	211.5

A grim dose of reality for a few of you. You know who you are.

INFIELD CHATTER

- I can tell that Possum's team is in contention without even looking at the point totals. I'm getting the *Wah-Wah-Wah-Wah-hoo* emails again. Oh, for the good old days of the **Red Sox**.

- B.T. muffed his chance to snare the crown jewel of the first free agent draft, Ichabod Sukiyaki, or whatever his damned name is, who was promptly snapped up by the **Tigers** to the dismay of the **Blues**. Bad move, B.T. By picking up Icky Kamikaze, or whatever his damned name is, you could have gone from having a truly awful hitting team to one that was merely nauseating. Better get back on the free agent beat, my friend.
- How about Maddux' incredible start? Three games, 20 innings, and an ERA identical to U-Bob's grade point average at the Horizon University School of Correspondence.
- Trying to figure out the source of the **Chiefs'** hitting woes, I took a gander at their roster and noted that it contains both Griffey and McGwire, B.T.'s second and fourth round draft choices. With McGwire on the DL with a bum knee and only one HR for the year, and Griffey batting .000 for the season, it's no small wonder that the **Chiefs** are in the league toilet. Why, if each of these superstars had the 75-100 points that you would expect through two weeks of the season, the **Chiefs** would be firmly in contention in this thing – for 9th or 10th place, that is. So at least B.T. has that going for him.
- When Shamu* snapped up Gonzo in the 10th round this year, I'm pretty sure he planned on him having home runs in double figures by tax day, aren't you? Toss in Nomo and Grudzielanek and Shamu's* got himself a belly and a backpack full of acorns that he has stumbled across this year.
- Mouse, you absolutely gotta love Larry Walker, doncha? If he could only play more than about 90 games this year, he's going to turn out to be one heckuva bargain.
- I'm still trying to figure out why McBlunder took Geoff Jenkins in the 6th round. And come to think of it, why did he take Freddie Garcia in the 7th and Cliff Floyd in the 8th? Painful.
- What's scary is that the **Wahoos** are a close second with Nomar on the shelf, Bonds just now starting to warm up, and Giambi posing as a Punch-and-Judy hitter. When they're all in the lineup and producing, look out.

- How about the Big Unit getting pulled after seven innings with 14 strikeouts, and then having his hat handed to him by the Cardinals. If you think Itchie is happy about this, think again.

SPOTLIGHT ON: BARRY BONDS

You don't have to like him, but you certainly have to respect him for reaching the 500 home run plateau, which happened on Tuesday night in the Giants' game against the Dodgers. (Last night, he upped his total to 501 with yet another homer, his 6th consecutive game with a round-tripper.)

Later this year, probably, Bonds may reach the 500 career stolen-base mark, making him the one and only 500/500 man in history, just as he is currently the only 400/400 man to have ever played the game.

Since 500 home runs is such a landmark achievement, let's take a look at the 17 players who have reached the mark:

1. Hank Aaron	755
2. Babe Ruth	714
3. Willie Mays	660
4. Frank Robinson	586
5. Harmon Killebrew	573
6. Reggie Jackson	563
7. Mark McGwire	555
8. Mike Schmidt	548
9. Mickey Mantle	536
10. Jimmie Foxx	534
11. Willie McCovey	521
Ted Williams	521
13. Ernie Banks	512
Eddie Matthews	512
15. Mel Ott	511
16. Eddie Murray	504
17. Barry Bonds	501

With the big cluster down at the bottom of the list, with any kind of year at all, Barry could easily move up into the top ten this year, in all likelihood ahead of Mickey Mantle's 536 and behind Mike Schmidt's 548. At age 36, Bonds probably has a couple of pretty decent years left in him should he decide to keep playing, which means that he could easily surpass the 600 career home-run mark one day, and end up 4th or 5th on the All-Time List before he is done, depending on Mark McGwire's knee. Not too shabby for a light-hitting leadoff man who knocked in only 59 runs in his first full year in major league baseball, 1987, when the

old Skipper spotted this diamond in the rough and snapped him up in the supplemental HSL draft to introduce him to our fantasy baseball league. Maybe the old Skipper does know just a little bit about talent.

But enough about me. It's not much of a stretch to suggest that Bonds should easily reach the 600 HR plateau, but 600 stolen bases seems pretty unlikely, given the fact that Bonds' stolen base numbers have slipped significantly the past couple of years. My prediction is that Bonds will end up with 625-650 career home runs, and with around 550 base thefts for his career.

We were lucky enough to see Bonds' No. 494 on Opening Day at Pacific Bell Park. Unfortunately, that blast was to center field and did not make it into McCovey Cove, as did No. 500. I don't know how many of you saw that shot, but it was quite a blast.

Bonds broke into professional baseball in 1986 as a rookie with the Pirates. Maybe there was a superstar that I'm not thinking of who broke in in 1985, but if not, Bonds may be the first future Hall of Famer to begin and end his major league career in the parallel world of the Hot Stove League. Makes me so darned proud I could just pop a button.

THE TRIP

Things are still looking great for our June 2-3 trip to Milwaukee. As soon as Mouse and McBlunder line up hotel accommodations, I'll ask them to furnish me some information so that I can put it out to you in the *Bullpen*. Seven official league members are a definite go, and One-Way Tony is also believed to be strongly on the right side of the bubble. Can't wait to see Miller Park.

Skipper