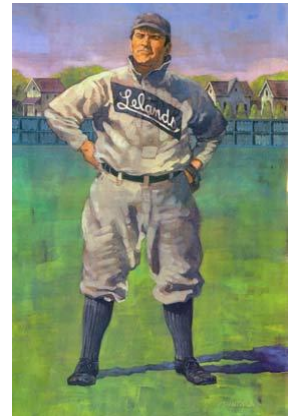

FROM THE BULLPEN

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2001 Season

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SENATORS STILL KING OF THE HILL

Managerial Gaffe Cuts into But Doesn't Cost League Lead

Brethren:

The **Senators** continue to dwell atop the standings of the Hot Stove League after six weeks of play, while maintaining a considerably-narrowed margin of 4 points over the defending champeen **Yahoos**. More later on why the **Senators** have given back part of their lead, but suffice for now to say that the Skipper's manager pulled one too many levers on the team machine last week.

The standings through six weeks are as follows:

Week 6 Standings

1.	Senators	2238
2.	Wahoos	2234
3.	Pirates	2077
4.	Cubs*	2056
5.	Redbirds	2040
6.	Tribe	1970
7.	Reds	1910
8.	Blues	1898
9.	Tigers	1891
10.	Skipjacks	1884
11.	Bombers	1776
12.	Chiefs	1441

Manny Ramirez, a beloved **Senator**, has taken over the top individual hitting spot from Carlos Delgado, leading all comers with 232 points through six weeks,

a nifty average of almost 40 points per week. Pedro Martinez, he of the golden right arm, continues to lead all pitchers with a total of 217 points.

The top hitting team in the league through six weeks is still the **Pirates**, with 1555 points. The second-best hitting squad is the **Senators** with 1473, while the **Chiefs** are at the bottom rung of this ladder with a painfully-puny total of 896 points, less than 150 points per week.

The top pitching team is still the **Wahoos**, with 877 points, followed by the **Redbirds** with 796 and the **Senators** with 764. The **Blues** are in last place in the arms race with 500 points, just behind the **Pirates** with 522.

Week 6 Point Totals

1.	Redbirds	453
2.	Skipjacks	387
3.	Wahoos	380
4.	Senators	326
5.	Bombers	323
6.	Blues	318
7.	Cubs*	311
8.	Tribe	295
9.	Reds	292
10.	Pirates	278
11.	Tigers	264
12.	Chiefs	256

The **Redbirds** had a surprisingly good week with 453 points, enough to boost them past the descending **Tribe** and into fifth place. The **Skipjacks** finally got off the schneid with their better-than-they-really-are 387 point week, but gained no ground in the standings. Looks like the **Jax** owner will have to be happy with other things in his life, like being rich, handsome, and having a full head of hair. Or at least rich.

The surprising **Blues** continue to inch their way up the totem pole, using their 318-point week to sneak past the toothless **Tigers**, who have returned to their true level of skill after one week of fooling the baseball gods.

THE BURNITZ BOO-BOO

Most of you have by now heard about my colossal blunder with Jeromy Burnitz, which is a classic example of overmanagement of one's team. Talk about outsmarting yourself. Here's what happened:

I pick up Jimmy Anderson of the Pirates on the free agent wire, thinking I'm one sharp cookie for snapping up this talented young arm. His first couple of starts for my team are in the minors, and so of course Jimmy twirls a couple of gems. So I figure it's time to promote him. So I look up and down my pitching roster, and all of my starters are doing pretty darned well, at the time, and I've only got nine hitters in my starting lineup, with my only duplication at right field with Manny Ramirez and Jeromy Burnitz. Although he got off to a great start, Burnitz was experiencing a bit of a dry spell, and so I figured I could demote him for three days, promote Jimmy Anderson to pick up two starts in the same week, and then demote Mac Suzuki or one of my other starters after their next bad performance and get Burnitz back up into the majors.

Fine plan, but poor execution. Anderson gets promoted, has back-to-back sorry outings, both deep into negative territory, and I forget to bump the Burnmeister back up into the starting lineup after three days on the bench. So, quite naturally, the fourth day that he is riding pine is the day that he hits three home runs in the same game, garnering six runs batted in, and leaving about 50-55 points on the bench. Coupled with Jimmy Boy's negative outings, the wrong-headed transaction ended up costing me about 75 points. To add salt to the wound, the first night that Burnie boy is back in my majors, the Brewers score 13 runs and Jeromy chalks up a nifty 4000.

I can't even remember the last time I had a hitter get bonus points, other than All-Star team bonuses. I think it might have been 1994 when Bagwell jacked thrice in one game, so I'm especially pleased that when my dry spell is over seven years later, I found a way to leave them on the bench.

BALLS AND STRIKES

▶ Through six weeks, the **Senators'** team ERA was 3.87, and my pitchers were 24 and 24. The **Chiefs'** staff, on the other hand, had a considerably higher team ERA of 4.38, yet somehow managed to fashion a collective 24 and 9 record for a .727 winning percentage. Go figure. Some guys have all the luck.

▶ The **Senators** continue to lead the league in team batting average with a perhaps unsustainable .312 average. The **Chiefs** continue to suck hind teat with a .251 team average. The **Blues** lead in at-bats with 1540, the **Pirates** lead in team runs with 257, the **Blues** and **Tribe** in hits with 426, the **Redbirds** in doubles with 100, the **Tigers** in triples with 14, and the **Senators** in home runs with 81 and RBI with 261. The **Pirates** lead in bases on balls with 199, and in stolen bases with 40. The not-so-fleetfooted **Tribe** have the fewest stolen bases with 13, and lead the way in errors with 31. The **Senators** have the highest hitting PPG average with 4.3, while the **Chiefs** hitters are averaging a dismal 2.7.

▶ Last year at this time, the **Skipjacks** were leading the league with 2441 points, 1611 hitting and 831 pitching. The **Wahoos** were a close second with 2362, with 1798 hitting points and 565 pitching points. The **Cubs*** were in dead last at this time last year, with 1625 points. A-Rod was the individual leader with 276 points, while R.J. led the pitchers with 247 points through six weeks last year.

▶ I see that Tricky is one of the sponsors for the Buckeroo Bash, a charity fundraiser that will be held the same weekend as our trip to Milwaukee, which apparently is Magpie's excuse for not going to Cheeseville with us. I thought it was another sick family member, but I have trouble keeping all of his excuses straight. Anyway, if I read this right, the Buckeroo Bash is a benefit function to provide financial relief for injured rodeo clowns. Now *there's* a worthy cause for you. Sounds like some guilt-ridden yuppies with too much dot com money and too much time on their hands. What's next, a charity ball for mentally deranged ex-XFL players?

▶ Don't know about the rest of you, but I'm getting pretty fired up to see Miller Park in Milwaukee. According to Shamu*, it shapes up to be one fine HSL experience.

▶ This weekend is our firm trip to Chicago, where we will supposedly see the **Senators'** own Kerry Wood take on the Diamondbacks. 20 Ks, anyone?

BOOK REVIEW

If any of you are looking for a really, really, really excellent book, read *When Pride Really Mattered*, the former bestseller book about Vince Lombardi by David Maraniss, copyright 1999, Simon and Schuster. Believe me, I am not a fan of pro football, but having grown up when the Packers were in their glory years, I thought that it looked like an interesting read. It is.

Until reading this book, I did not know that Lombardi was one of the fabled Seven Blocks of Granite, the powerful front line of the Fordham football team of 1936. Of this famous line, Grantland Rice wrote his famous poem:

*Great, mighty Minnesota fell, upon a fateful
day,
Both Yale and Army felt the axe, and tossed
their crowns away,
Big Holy Cross, an early boss, hears no more
winning hands,
Yes, strange things happened everywhere, but
the Fordham Wall still stands.*

*Who took the thrust of SMU and rolled its
charges back?
Who stood the Gaels upon their heels and broke
up each attack?
Who held young Goldberg at the line, with will-
ing hearts and hands?
The answer rings from Coast to Coast: The
Fordham Wall still stands.*

I also did not realize, until reading the book, that Lombardi coached at Army under Red Blaik from 1949, right after their glorious national championship years, until 1954, when he left (three years after the infamous West Point cadet scandal of 1951) and became the offensive coordinator for the New York Giants of the NFL. Tom Landry, by the way, was the defensive coordinator for the same New York Giants team. Not a bad staff.

Anyway, read *When Pride Really Mattered*. You'll be glad that you did.

And that's going to do it for this issue. Talk at you next week.

Skipper