
THE JIGGERNAUT

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From the Bullpen

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Road Trip Edition

Greetings to my fellow HSL Owners:

I realize you have all been anxiously awaiting the publication of this fine periodical so that you can hear the details of the league Trip. I apologize for the slight delay in getting *The Jiggernaut* to print. My fingers are so fat from ingesting Bratwurst, beer, and peanuts for 36 hours that I have been unable to properly stroke the keyboard in order to put my thoughts in writing. Unable to shed the 20 pound weight gain from the Trip and get my fingers back to normal size, I was forced to slit them and allow the sausage grease to drip out, finally facilitating my ability to land on the home keys. I'm finally ready to go.

MILWAUKEE, THE VENUE

We all know the feeling of going on a three-day bender as described above. The extra chin, the "too snut" belt, the inability to take a deep breath, all make you take pause and ask yourself, "How long can I do this?" Believe me, the people of Milwaukee are not asking that question. In all my years I have never seen such an assemblage of pasty-white, grossly overweight people who revel in the fact that they are all cardiac time bombs. The sausage and brew culture is not an occasional liberty taken at the weekend ballgame. It is

an everyday way of life for the Cheeseheads. If you own stock in a Milwaukee-based fitness facility, sell it and invest in Krispy Kreme. I'm just happy that we blended in so well.

We did experience at least three "firsts" on our Trip that immediately come to mind. They include:

- First HSL Trip in June where wind chill was still a factor. With a temperature of 49 degrees and a "feel like" (for those of you who went to Iowa) temperature of 40 degrees, we were never so happy in our life to be in a domed stadium. Some of the less intelligent league members didn't even bring a pair of long pants to wear.
- First HSL Trip where we actually purchased a van (at least I assume that's why we had to pay \$500 each for the luxury vehicle which was driven a total of twelve miles during our entire stay).
- First HSL members to be part of the largest crowd in Miller Park history. We were there, dammit, and no one can ever take that away from us.

Our selection of the first weekend in June for this particular Trip was unfortunate, as we missed "Pridefest" by one week. With Billy Bean as the Grand Poobah, who knows what new uses we may have found for the Bratwurst. That's one Sausage Race where there is no winner.

From the Bullpen

June 11, 2001

Page 1

MILLER PARK

Miller Park is quite a spectacular structure, in that it is hard to believe that a stadium which holds 43,000 fans can also hold 86,000 beer vendors. If not for that fact, I would have sworn we were watching a game at Enron Field. From the retractable roof to the Crickets with Tickets, the similarities were many. In spite of my utter distaste for indoor baseball, it is an enjoyable experience and a great leap forward from the charmingly decrepit County Stadium.

The feeding frenzy over tickets by certain league fustspots was all wasted energy. For Saturday night's game, Mouse and Chuck came up with premium ducats, placing us so close to Todd Hundley we could actually smell had bad he stinks. Sunday was nearly as good, as the CWt were able to "hook a brother up" with six excellent seats so close we could see the lack of rotation on Ben Sheets' slider.

THE BALLGAMES

The first game saw the **Blues'** own Kevin Tapani and several other Cubs hurlers combine to throttle the Brew Crew by "scattering" 16 hits over nine innings. We were able to watch Sammy deposit one in the upper deck, and the North Siders were impressive in running their winning streak to a dozen. During the game, Mouse and Skippy were inebriated enough to pull the trigger on a blockbuster trade, each whispering in my ear what an idiot the other was for parting with such talent for virtually nothing in return. The morning after was another story. No greater remorse has been present since Honest Abe came off a five-day drunk and said, "I freed who?" My only disappointment of the night came when Shamu* pulled the rug out from under me on a straight-up Brent Mayne-for-Mike Piazza deal which we had struck in good faith. (We also agreed to Most Favored Nations language, Punitive Damages, Force Majuere, and Patent Infringement language, but he denied all that as well.) Damn Possum Junior.

Sunday's matinee brought even greater excitement for the crew. We arrived early enough to grab a spot overlooking the left field fence as the Cubs took batting practice, with Blood Mary in one hand and cement thumbs in the other. One of the Cubs (let's say it was Sammy Sosa to make it exciting) was kind enough to toss a ball in the direction of Shamu* and Mouse. The ensuing donnybrook over the horsehide resulted in the

ball falling back onto the field. Memories of a seat cushion swirling to the ground came rushing back to Shamu*, and he recoiled in agony, the disappointment etched all over his freckled mug. Mouse was then able to convince Ernie Banks, I mean, Sammy, to once again toss the pill his way, and this time he snagged it for good. Serves you right, sum Junior.

After finishing our libations, we were headed to our seats and bumped headfirst into none other than the Com-mish himself. Mr. Selig was headed up the elevator to his luxury suite when Mouse accosted him, convincing him to pause and sign the very ball which only moments before had shattered Shamu's* very existence. What a Kodak moment. Now there's a man who has put his stamp on our national pastime.

The game itself was another thriller. The Brewers were able to pull out the victory by the length of the flaxen hair on Jeromy Burnitz's chinny chin chin. Not until Burny brought Sammy's deep drive back from over the fence with two outs in the ninth was the victory safe for Ben Sheets. The Brewers' snapping of the Cubbies' win streak gave the home fans an unnecessary reason to indulge themselves with a post-game dessert Brat.

THE ACTIVITIES

Given the age and lack of stamina of the Trip's attendees, Saturday night's post-game celebrations were relatively mundane. With the weather throwing a wet blanket on the Riversplash celebration and the closing of Smuggler's twelve years earlier due to patron violence and intimidation (What I Like About You...HEY!!!), we were content to throw back a few frosties at Buck Bradley's. After schmoozing with the locals for a couple hours, the HSL members began to hit the wall, one by one, until Itchie, Captain Morgan, and a nine-inch stogie were the only ones engaged in conversation. We closed her down shortly thereafter, and with One-Way Tony absent from this boondoggle, the strippers in Milwaukee had to go hungry for another week.

All in all, the annual league Trip was a smashing success. Another great ballpark, a few cold ones with the boys, enough memories to last a lifetime, and an appreciation for humans under 250 pounds were the spoils to the attendees.

JAX JIBBER JABBER

Skippy's most recent *Bullpen* droned on and on about how each of our teams was headed for a precipitous fall, based on the massive overachievement of our marginal

players. It is just a testament to his vast knowledge and extensive preparation that his team will in no way be subject to that same fate. We all know Aaron Sele will finish the year 24-0, and Curt Schilling will close at 27-3. (Well, Schilling might, but no freaking way is Sele gonna continue marching down that path.)

While the season is now more than one-third over and it would appear that it's a two-horse race, I will caution you that things are not always what they seem. The Itchie one predicts that injuries, failed drug tests, and 15-year-old hookers will all rear their ugly heads and become factors in pulling down the **Hoowas** and **Senators**, not to mention a dose of "talent reality" slapping those two back-slapping butt buddies in the face. It's going to be a dogfight come late September. Keep working that free agent wire and playing that proverbial shell game, and head for the finish line.

Itchie

P.S. Scott, thanks for not participating this year. If you were trying, that would be one more team I'd have to look up at in the standings. By the way, would you like to unburden yourself of some of those nonperformers on your team, like Griffey and McGwire?