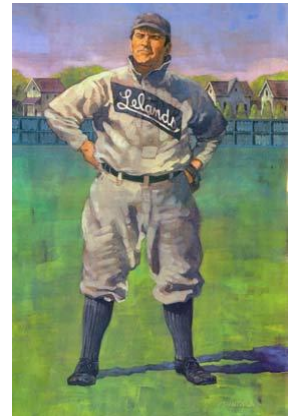

FROM THE BULLPEN

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2001 Season

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Otherwise known as a rambling “stream of consciousness” discourse of no consequence by the Hot Stove League’s most under-appreciated manager. . . I have not written an edition of the *The Bullpen* for several years. The reason people generally stop writing, is that they do not have anything to say.....and this is no exception. However, when Skipper calls and asks a favor, who am I to say no.

One of the ironies of calling this the *Seventh Inning Stretch* (title chosen by the league scribe) is that as I make my way to Royals stadium for another disastrous Royals game, I refuse to stand up for the 7th inning stretch, because after they sing “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” they play the Limbo song and show idiots dancing below an imaginary line on the Jumbo Tron. It is stupid, but amazingly entertains the morons that attend baseball games these days. I hate the Jumbo Tron and all that is associated with it, the loud obnoxious music, the commercials etc. Maybe that is why I like Wrigley Field so much...no Jumbo Tron, no stupid music, just a simple scoreboard.

Speaking of ballparks, if you have not already done so, check out a simple, noncommercial web site: www.baseballparks.com. It is made by a fan and done quite well, I think. He has commentary on almost all ballparks and numerous minor league parks. (Also note that he includes Kauffman Stadium in his listing of “Must See” ball parks.) As I said, it is not a professional web site, but looks pretty good to me. Check it out.

I presume that one reason that Skipper wanted me to write this week’s *Bullpen*, is, aside from the fact that he is tired of doing it, that he wants me to whine and moan about my team, about my stupid shell game with Kevin Tapani, about how my managerial skills are under-appreciated by the league scribe; about how I

picked a horribly crappy team on Draft Day, yet, have skillfully maneuvered it into contention for an Upper Division finish; about how I picked Andruw (Can’t Spell My Name Correctly) Jones instead of Barry Bonds; about how I picked the under-achieving, testosterone deficient, Mike (I Can’t Pitch Against Pedro Again) Mussina in the first round, yet he is barely above .500 for the World Champion Yankees; about how I have no middle infielders; about how when past managers, who may be related to the league scribe, have scoured the free agent wire and built a championship team by numerous free agent acquisitions, it is called skillful and savvy managing, yet when I am able to parlay a slow start into some solid free agent pick-ups, I am skewered and lambasted for “cherry picking” or other such slights and barbs. Well, I am just not going to do it, I am not going to take the bait. I am above such whining and moaning. I know that my time will come and at the end of the season our league scribe will give me my due and retract those dead-ass last comments and put them to rest once and for all.

I don’t read a lot of national publications, but I am amazed how little has been made of Joe Torre moving Mussina out of the rotation to miss another match-up with Pedro. If I was Mussina, I would be embarrassed and beg Torre to put me in there. Torre was essentially saying that my \$50 million pitcher couldn’t match up....what an embarrassment. Mussina actually had a very strong outing in the first match-up against Pedro.

From the Did-You-Know Department

Did you know that there are presently three major league players that have the first name A.J.? Pierzynski of the Twins, Burnett of the Marlins and Hinch of the Royals. Being the father of an A.J., it is important that I keep up on these things. Nothing better than watching “Baseball Tonight” with your 10-year old and having him ask about the

A.J.'s and also constantly reminding you that you could have drafted Barry Bonds.

I see that Mitch picked up Rick Ankiel—not certain why—don't think he is going to be up with the big boys anymore this year. I took a flyer on him in the draft and hung with him as long as I could—longer than I should have. I don't think his career is over—just don't think he is going to do anything this year.

I am embarrassed by the fact that my pitching points just recently surpassed the **Chiefs**, who are working with their Draft-picked staff. If I had my Draft-picked staff going, I'd be in real trouble. Although I note that I wasn't the only team struggling to surpass the **Chiefs** in pitching points.

One highlight for the **Blues** has been the white-hot Mike Sweeney, the American League player of the month for June (who managed to lead my beloved Royals to an astounding 13-13 record for the month). Sweeney is becoming a local folk hero here in K.C. He is an outstanding young man, by all reports. He is almost too good to be true. I did hear a story from a friend whose niece dated him for a time—but she got tired of all the Bible reading sessions for dates.

Cliff Floyd got absolutely robbed by that a-hole Bobby Valentine, leaving him off the All-Star team. Floyd is having an outstanding year—a very savvy pick on my part—that was questioned in an earlier edition of *From the Bullpen*. We was robbed !!!! I want my ten points and I want to take it out of Bobby V's hide.

My next report to the league will be my book report on Roger Angell's latest book about David Cone. Just started it. Will write more later—or maybe this is enough from me—more than enough. In any event Angell is easily one of the top 2 or 3 baseball writers of all time. If you haven't read him before, do so now. I will provide to Ernie for later publication a listing of his books.

Just checked the league standings—I thought I felt a strong wind rushing by and I just was passed by the **Skipjacks**—nothing like a weekly roller coaster ride as I plummet from 3rd to 8th in a matter of days. The only good thing is that with a little hot streak, I could be back up there in a few days. It is going to be a wild ride to the finish—see you there. (Let's just hope I am not asked to write about it.)

(I am sure that I am supposed to provide the league standings, points for the week, etc., but I have no idea what they are.....) Later.

Stretch McBlunder

EDITOR'S NOTE

Since Stretch spent most of his time whining about his own problems and foibles and failed to mention anything about the league standings, allow me to share with the Brothers the standings and point totals through and for Week 13:

Week 13 Standings

1.	Wahoos	4854
2.	Senators	4787
3.	Reds	4480
4.	Pirates	4381
5.	Blues	4317
6.	Redbirds	4294
7.(t)	Cubs*	4294
8.	Tigers	4287
9.	Skipjacks	4256
10.	Tribe	4181
11.	Bombers	3996
12.	Chiefs	3705

The point totals during Week 13 were as follows:

Week 13 Totals

1.	Reds	461
2.	Redbirds	460
3.	Senators	386
4.	Tigers	382
5.	Pirates	373
6.	Skipjacks	340
7.	Wahoos	335
8.	Tribe	317
9.	Bombers	309
10.	Blues	297
11.	Cubs*	286
12.	Chiefs	221

Luis Gonzalez continues to be the league MVP, now with 500 points. Randy Johnson is the Cy Young leader with 375 points.

Answer to Last Week's Quiz

The only organization to have fielded a team for all 125 years of the National League is the now Atlanta Braves. In 1876, when the National League was formed, this team was known as the Boston Red Stockings. They remained in Boston from 1876 to 1952, going through a series of name changes which included the Beaneaters, the Bees, and finally the Braves.

The Braves moved to Milwaukee in 1952, where they remained until moving to Atlanta in 1966.

This National League organization has won a total of twelve World Championships, as follows:

1876 Boston Red Stockings
1877 Boston Red Stockings
1878 Boston Red Stockings
1883 Boston Red Stockings
1891 Boston Beaneaters
1892 Boston Beaneaters
1893 Boston Beaneaters
1897 Boston Beaneaters
1898 Boston Beaneaters
1914 Boston Braves
1957 Milwaukee Braves
1995 Atlanta Braves

The answer to the second portion of the quiz was that the first-ever World Series was held between the Boston Pilgrims (later the Red Sox) of the American League and the Pittsburgh Pirates of the Senior National League circuit, with the Pilgrims from the upstart American League besting the Pirates of the National League by a tally of five games to three in a best of nine series. The star pitcher for the Pilgrims was none other than Cy Young, while the star player for the Pirates was Honus Wagner, who was hampered by an injury in his first World Series.

☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞

Thanks to Stretch for enlightening us on his curmudgeon's view of life in the Hot Stove League in 2001. Well done, Elongated One.

Skipper