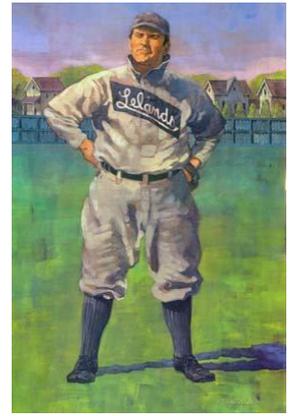


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# FROM THE BULLPEN

## Official Publication of the Hot Stove League Eastern Nebraska Division



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2001 Season

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### MOTHER OF ALL PENNANT RACES

Brethren:

I wasn't planning on penning another issue of *FTB* until after the season, but this week's events have been so remarkable and exciting that I couldn't help but put out a short Special Edition to memorialize for everyone the dramatic climax of the 2001 season.

### BACK FROM THE DEAD

Possum's **Wahoos** have risen from the ashes like the phoenix and placed themselves squarely in the hunt for a fourth HSL title. Given up for dead less than two weeks ago, the **Wahoos** have managed to milk two fabulous wins out of Randy Wolf, of all people, and have cobbled together enough points from the likes of Ray Durham, Jose Ortiz and similar ilk to give the **Wahoos** a bona fide opportunity to take this thing. With the Big Unit throwing on Sunday (what is Brenly thinking about???) and the *en fuego* Wolfman also taking the rosin bag, I certainly wouldn't bet against the **Wahoos** to finish off the biggest comeback since Don Knotts joined the cast of *Three's Company*.

The **Reds**, on the other hand, have been a tad cool this past week, but have the studs of their staff (Leiter, Lidle, Zito and Washburn) ready to take the ball tonight and Sunday. In fact, it looks like all three of the contending teams have at least two starting pitchers who will be throwing on Sunday.

This is a nail-biter of a race if ever there was one. Possum has been pestering me to check the archives and find out if we have ever had a closer contest, and so last

night I went to the books and found that only 1999<sup>1</sup> is comparable in terms of having more than two teams fighting it out during the last week of competition. There have been a couple of other years that there were reasonably close races between two teams, and of course, in the Dead Ball Era, there were a couple of seasons that came down to the postseason awards to decide our winner, but in terms of out-and-out drama involving three different teams, the 2001 season is now *the season* against which all future seasons will be compared. You don't believe me? Look at this:

### 44 POINTS SEPARATE TOP THREE TEAMS

As of today, with only the Friday, Saturday and Sunday slates of games to be played, the **Senators** lead the HSL standings with 9119, followed closely by the **Reds** with 9098, and the **Wahoos** with 9075. A total of 44 points separate these three teams. More importantly, all three teams have multiple starting pitchers yet to throw their last games of the year, with Possum having the Big Unit to finish off his season on Sunday. Since RJ is capable of throwing a no-hitter and 20 strikeouts any time he takes the mound, anything is possible with three days of baseball to go.

The **Reds** likewise have ample opportunity to regain the lead and take the title with starts remaining from staff aces Barry Zito and Al Leiter as well as Washburn and Lidle, and I think one other **Reds** pitcher whose identity escapes me. In fact, to add to the drama, Zito and Wash-

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<sup>1</sup> Entering the last week of the 1999 season, the **Skipjacks** led the way with 9204, followed by the **Chiefs** with 9158 and the **Cubs\*** with 9078, or 126 points separating 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup>. This year it's 72 points separating 1<sup>st</sup> from 3<sup>rd</sup> after 25 weeks. The final margin of victory in 1999 was 67 points, with the **Skipjacks** at 9484 and the **Chiefs** at 9417.

burn square off *against each other* on Sunday, I think, in a match-up which could be for all the marbles. If Zito and Washburn both throw gems and Zito tosses another one- or two-hitter with ten strikeouts or so, it's hard to see anyone else winning this thing other than Tricko.

Adding to the drama is the fact that there are still a couple of promotion decisions to be made, such as Mr. Pettitte up in New York. Will Possum promote him to starting status and take the risk that Andy will do a 20-point moonwalk, as he is well capable of doing?<sup>2</sup>

In any event, it will certainly be a finish to remember. Even for those of you not fighting for a money spot, there are still draft positions to be gained. The **Tribe** is currently sitting in 4<sup>th</sup> with 8599, with the **Skipjacks** back only 12 points at 8587. The **Cubs\*** have an outside shot at 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> with 8493, while the **Tigers**, with 8414, are still vying for an Upper Division finish and to hold off the late-surging **Blues** (8400).

If any of you should need to find me this Sunday night around midnight, I'll be perched in my home office chair, frantically scratching out manual points as I scan the box scores.

Good luck to all! Hey, who am I kidding? Die, **Reds**, die. Fold, **Wahoos**, fold. **GO SENATORS!**

Skipper

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<sup>2</sup>Andy is a former **Senator**, and I have first-hand knowledge and experience in this. I know of which I speak.

P.S.

### WEEK 25 STANDINGS

1.	Reds	8974
2.	Senators	8930
3.	Wahoos	8902
4.	Tribe	8502
5.	Skipjacks	8460
6.	Cubs*	8389
7.	Tigers	8265
8.	Pirates	8219
9.	Blues	8218
10.	Redbirds	8111
11.	Bombers	7620
12.	Chiefs	6911

### WEEK 25 POINT TOTALS

1.	Skipjacks	383
2.	Wahoos	375
3.	Redbirds	347
4.	Senators	332
5.	Pirates	331
6.	Blues	310
7.	Reds	303
8.	Chiefs	280
9.	Bombers	260
10.	Tribe	250
11.	Tigers	205
12.	Cubs*	197