



# TIGER BEAT

Special Edition of

## From the Bullpen

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I know. The name "Tiger Beat sounds more like a teenage girls' magazine than a baseball rag. But the pack of slugs that make up the Tigers this year has pretty much run out its string, and at present, I am more interested in high school girls' soccer than whether I will finish 4th, 5th, 6th in the Hot Stove this season.

### BIG RED RECORD

It figures that the week I am assigned to pen the Bullpen follows Magpie's gargantuan outburst of 589 points last week. In case you didn't notice, Mitch immediately sent out a self-congratulatory e-mail to all League members about his best BJFB Team of the Week finish. As I told Ted and Ernie previously, please keep me posted on a daily basis of any national ranking and/or great performances by your team and players. Such information is much more important to those of us who are relegated to sifting through our own players' daily 4 0 0 0 line scores and non-quality pitching performances. Not.

Actually, I'm pretty sure that the Reds' 589 weekly total is the highest in Hot Stove League history. 589 points is huge. To put it in perspective, there have been about 250 weeks since we started the Bill James format. During that 10-year stretch, I have had the grand total of **one** week over 500. In order to get over 500, all of the planets have to be aligned just right, and unexpected things have to happen. Most of my starters have two starts for the week and won twice. Rick F. Helling even threw a complete game shut-out. Amazingly,

there were no slumps or negative pitching points, and I finished with 502 points. That isn't even within shouting distance of the Reds' total of 589.

How do you get to 589? The Reds had 283 hitting points, and **302 pitching points**. 302 pitching points in a week has to be another record. The Reds pitchers and their weekly totals:

Zito	59
A. Leiter	49
Leiber	25
Washburn	11
Abbott	16
Foulke	49
Mendoza	21
Pineiro	17
Gordon	26
Lidle	8
Dotel	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>302</b>

The Reds even left Millwood's 23 and Chen's 25 in the minors. When things are working like that, watch out.

### SORRY, POSSUM. THERE'S STILL A MONTH TO GO.

The pennant race this season has basically been portrayed by the Skipper as a two horse race between the

front-running Wahoos and the Senators. I guess I see a two-team race, but the Wahoos aren't going to be in it. Possum's hot air balloon is dropping at a precipitous pace, and the giveaway of Bonds and Giambi (see below) isn't going to slow the descent. Nomar is hurting and probably headed for the DL for the rest of the year. Look at their everyday lineup: A. Gonzalez, Higginson, Jose Cruz, Jr., and Cordova. Yeesh. These guys might hit a few solo homers, but this team isn't going to be scoring many hitting points, particularly since the Wahoos have already hit the home run cap like the kid running wind sprints in the Pep Boys commercial. It says here that the race for the Cup will be between the Senators and the Reds.

## VON HAYES REVISITED?

What was the deal with the Wahoos giving up the farm, the crown jewels and the family cow to the Skipjacks to get Randy Johnson? Simply put, it was sheer and utter panic. This deal somehow passed muster with the vigilant staff at Bill James, but I don't know how, Bonds **and** Jason Giambi **and** Vazquez for Randy Johnson. I've been told that Brian Giles was originally part of the package. If Giles had been added or Vazquez removed, then it looks more equitable. Since the trade, Randy Johnson has been great. But Vazquez has been almost as good. (106.5 to 93.5 points). Add in Bonds and Giambi, and the Skipjacks absolutely got a steal. Obviously, the homers by these two weren't going to help the Wahoos, but they score a lot of other points (average, walks, runs, RBI, etc.) that are going to be missed. By the end of the year, this trade will be recalled as the Wahoos' horror movie of the summer ("Scream" "I Know What You Did Last Summer") that will prove to be their undoing.

This ghastly trade particularly sticks in my craw because I spent considerable time trying to get Bonds when he only had about 32 home runs. The offer: Ichiro for Bonds, straight up. The deal made sense for both teams, because Possum was scheduled to (and ultimately did) hit the wall hard in homers, and Ichiro would have given him batting average, runs, and steals while slowing the pace of the homers. I needed (and still need) home runs, because the Big Fat Hurt took a powder, and my pack of banjo hitters have been dead ass last in homers all season. Unfortunately, Possum couldn't pull the trigger, and/or Max wouldn't OK the deal.

## NEVER EVERS

Actually, my offer to trade for Bonds runs counter to an old axiom that I abandoned this year (in spades). Don't get players you hate. Somehow, I tried to corner the market on hated players when I took, *in consecutive rounds*, Fat Frank Thomas, Sheffield, and Moises Alou. If I had tried for Bonds, all that would be left is to pick up Rickey Henderson and Vince Coleman in the free agent pool.

MEMO to Frank: You worthless piece of shit. I hope no one signs your fat ass after you spent all summer drinking beer, smoking cigarettes and waxing your boat in your driveway. (ala Junior Miller.)

On this subject, if you didn't already hate Barry Bonds, read the column by Rick Reilly in this week's Sports Illustrated. Barry has skipped the SF Giants team picture the last two years. In the clubhouse, he has his own PR man, masseur and flex guy, three lockers, a reclining massage chair and a big-screen TV positioned so that only he can see it. Last year, when he was running neck and neck with Jeff Kent for the league MVP, he had his PR man calling the commissioner's office during the last week of the season to find out who had won. He had to know, according to the stooge, because if Barry wasn't going to win, he wanted to get out of town. Nice. No staying around to congratulate his teammate. According to Reilly, they'll be able to hold Bonds' funeral in a fitting room. As Jimmy Durante said about someone he didn't like: "I couldn't warm up to that guy if we was being cremated together."

## ICHIRO FOR MVP

Seattle had a good pitching staff, but the reason for their success this year is Ichiro getting on base and scoring in the first inning of almost every game. You know the guy is good when Joe Morgan tries to criticize him. According to the all-knowing Morgan, Ichiro is not a good lead-off man because he doesn't take enough pitches for the other guys on the team to see what the pitcher is throwing. Give me a break. Ichiro is hitting .345, already has over 200 hits, and is getting Seattle ahead so often that they are winning a lot of games early. Maybe if Ichiro took more pitchers like Joe did when he played, Ichiro could get his career average down to Joe's .267. Then he would be good. Boone is

having a career fluke year, but I think a lot of that has to do with having Ichiro on base bothering the pitcher. (Boone will, of course, grind to a screeching halt now that he is on the Tigers). Ichiro gets my vote for MVP.

That's all. Sorry I didn't mention much about the non-contending teams in the league, but I really haven't paid that much attention to them, including my own.

### Big Guy

*Editor's Notes:* Nice first effort from Big Guy. However, if I had known that he was going to spend half the issue brown-nosing Tricko, I would have pulled the plug on this assignment. My approach would have been to totally ignore Magpie, since Curby made the unforgivable gaffe of blowing his own horn just as soon as he could log onto the computer Monday morning. Don't break your arm slapping yourself on the back there, Horatio.

I still can't believe that the **Reds** have passed up the **Senators** and are currently in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Last time I looked, about a week ago, they were several hundred points behind with little chance of making up any ground. Then the lucky son-of-a-gun comes up with a 589-point week, of all things. Like Big Guy, I think my team has cracked the 500-point mark maybe once in almost nine full years of play, and then by just a couple of points. Magpie's team total even gives us hope that one of us might one day crack the 600-point barrier.

As for the **Senators**, to me they look like 28 Moises Alous in late September on a team that is far out of the pennant race, just going through the motions with their shoulders hunched over. I had all of my starters going twice last week – Schilling, Sele, Weaver and Mulder, and I didn't get even one stinking win out of the whole group. During the week my pitchers went a collective 0-and-3, and Mark Mulder managed to throw in a minus 20-point outing in the early part of the week.

Unfortunately, Big Guy didn't bother to provide us with the Week 21 standings or the point totals for Week 21, except for his idol, Magpie, so I can't tell you where all of you finished after 21 weeks. All I know is that the **Wahoos** are still in 1<sup>st</sup>, though perhaps not for long; the **Reds** are now in a solid 2<sup>nd</sup> place position, and the **Senators** are

in 3<sup>rd</sup> and in danger of being out of the race, since no one seems to want to trade with poor old Skipper.

Beyond that, I know that the **Bombers** are in 11<sup>th</sup> and the **Chiefs** are in 12<sup>th</sup>, but the other seven teams could be in just about any combination of 4<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup>.

Just a little over four weeks to go in the season, and it promises to be one heckuva finish. Thanks to Big Guy for sharing with us the *Tiger Beat*.

### Skipper