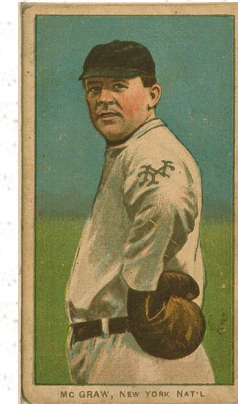

From the Bullpen

Official Publication of the

Hot Stove League

Eastern Nebraska Division



2002 Season

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RED STORM RISING

TOP FIVE TEAMS IN PITCHED BATTLE FOR LEAD

PIRATES SEIZE CONTROL OF LOWER DIVISION

CHIEFS RALLY PAST FLAGGING WAHOOS AND TIGERS

Brethren:

Week 7 saw another changing of the guard as the **Reds** rallied past the **Jax** and the **Cubs*** and took over first place in the league with 2589 points, 9 better than the **Baby Bears*** and 40 more than the toppled **Jax**. In this pitched battle for the 2002 Cup, the weekly lead continues to fluctuate with the pitching rotations of the top teams, with no team able to break away from the pack and establish itself as the front-running favorite. Just down the ladder a half-rung from the **Skipjacks** are the **Senators** with 2519.5, and just below them the **Bronx Bombers** are at 2498, giving us five teams

While the **Reds** put together a 407.5 week -- third best in the league -- to race past the **Skipjacks** into first, the top two scoring teams in the league during Week 7 are from the -- gasp -- Lower Division. That's right, two of the unwashed have boldly gone where few in their division have gone before, to the 400+ point territory. The **Pirates** swashbuckled their way to the top point total in the league this week with 439.5 points, elevating the **Buccos** to the top drawer of the basement bureau and empowering the trash-talking SloPay to give Possum an earful* since the **Pirates** now hold a 150+-point cushion over the **Hapless 'Hoos**.

The second-best team during Week 7 was -- drum roll, please -- the **Chiefs**. As their new managing partner continues to get his sea legs and is starting to push the right buttons and pull the right levers, the proud **Native Warriors** are able to boast a 433-point total during Week 7. This worthy performance has allowed the **Chiefs** to creep past the **Tigers** and **Wahoos** and into 9th place, providing a further degree of

within 91 points of the lead.

separation from the lowly **Redbirds**.

* Or eyeful, if SloPay can figure out how to turn his computer on and get to the Message Board of our website. On the other hand, perhaps SloPay is concerned that by actually using the website he is obligating himself to the tune of 30 bucks, which obligation, by the way, is apparently not felt by a good lot of you. But the rest of you should feel ashamed -- even the jobless and prospectless Itchie finally forked over his 30 clams for the privilege of being lambasted on line by *FTB*.

While Tirebiter's **Birds** threaten to be out of the running for 11th place by the All-Star break, his rotisserie bass-fishing team is in tall cotton, currently in third place in the standings behind Larry "the Lunger" Robideaux and Darwyn "the Dentist's Dream" Theerie. That's our Iowa boy!

The top hitting team in the league is the **Reds** with 1628.5 points, followed by the **Senators** with 1585.5, just a half-point ahead of the **Blues**. The **Redbirds**, no surprise here, trail the pack in the hitting department with 1204.0 points.

The top pitching team is the **Skipjacks** with 1168.5, followed by the **Cubs*** with 1106.5 and the **Bombers** with 1006.0. At the other end, the **Blues'** staff is the league laggard with 651.0 points, a full 50 points behind the second-worst **Redbirds**. Not that pitching is important or anything, Stretch.

Barry Bonds continues to be the league MVP with 244 points, including bonus points, and Curt Schilling is the league Cy Young through seven weeks with 249.5 points.

WEEK 7 STANDINGS

Upper Division

1.	Reds	2589.0
2.	Cubs*	2578.0
3.	Skipjacks	2549.0
4.	Senators	2519.5
5.	Bombers	2498.0
6.	Tribe	2433.5

Lower Division

7.	Pirates	2322.5
8.	Blues	2236.0
9.	Chiefs	2186.0
10.	Wahoos	2169.5
11.	Tigers	2148.5
12.	Redbirds	1905.0

WEEK 7 POINT TOTALS

1.	Pirates	439.5
2.	Chiefs	433.0

TOP INDIVIDUAL PERFORMERS

Hitters**

1.	Bonds	234
(T)	A-Rod	234
3.	Vladdy	223
4.	Sosa	208
5.	Soriano	203

3. Reds	407.5
4. Cubs*	389.0
5. Senators	394.0
6. Bombers	380.5
7. Tribe	360.0
8. Skipjacks	350.5
9. Blues	299.0
10. Redbirds	293.0
11. Tigers	229.5
12. Wahoos	224.5

6. Posado	200
7. Berkman	199
(T) Floyd (Cliff, not Pink)	199
9. Hunter (Torii, not David)	187
(T) Helton (Todd, not Red)	187
(T) Spivey	186
12. Rollins (Jimmy, not Tree)	183
13. Delgado	181
14. Lowell	179

** Bonus points not included.

Pitchers

1. Schilling	233
2. RJ	219
3. Perez (Odalis, not O'Houston)	189
4. Gagne (Eric, not Vern)	182
5. Lowe	186
6. Astacio	177
(T) Clemens	177
8. Kim	176
9. Byrd (Paul, not Admiral)	175
(T) Glavine	175
11. Leiter	165
12. Pedro	164
13. Oswalt	163
(T) Guardado	163
15. Isringhausen	161

ALL-TIME LEADERS

Just for fun, let's take a look at the all-time leaders in HSL points, from 1993 to 2001, as published last October. I have asked Linda to post this to our website as a regular accessible statistic, for your ease of future reference.

HITTING

PITCHING

<u>Player</u>	<u>Points/ PPG</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Team/Rnd Drafted</u>
1. Johnson	747/21.3	2001	SkiHoos (1/1)
2. Clemens	746/21.9	1997	Red Sox (5)
3. Johnson	738.21.1	1999	Tigers (1/6)
4. Pedro	731/25.2	2000	Skipjacks (1/1)
5. Pedro	724/23.3	1999	Bombers (1/7)
6. Pedro	706/22.8	1997	Reds (5)
7. Smoltz	687/19.6	1996	Red Sox (4)
8. Schilling	681/19.4	2001	Senators (3)
9. Brown	681/18.9	1998	Tribe (1/10)
10. Maddux	677/24.1	1995	Skipjacks (1/6)
11. Johnson	669/19.1	1998	Senators (1/1)
12. Maddux	647/19.0	1998	Senators (1/1)
13. Johnson	635/21.2	1995	Reds (2)

<u>Player</u>	<u>Points/ PPG</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Team/Rnd Drafted</u>
1. Bonds	923/6.0	2001	WaJax (3)
2. Sosa	897/5.6	2001	TriBombs
3. ARod	871/5.4	2001	Reds (1)
4. Walker	862/5.6	1997	Redbirds (3)
5. Helton	859/5.4	2000	Wahoos (4)
6. Gonzo	846/5.2	2001	Cubs*
7. ARod	844/5.7	2000	Tigers (1)
8. McGwire	843/5.4	1998	Tigers (3)
9. ARod	834/5.7	1996	Chiefs (16)
10. Helton	829/5.2	2001	Senators (1)
11. Sosa	814/5.1	1998	Bombers (7)
12. Bonds	802/5.0	1993	Senators (1)
13. Burks	797/5.1	1997	Cubs* (16)
14. Alomar	797/5.0	1999	Senators (4)
15. Kent	795/5.0	2000	Wahoos (7)
16. Jeter	790.5.0	1999	Trirates (1)
17. Piazza	785/5.2	1997	Reds (1)

14. Clemens	628/19.0	1998	Blues (2)
15. Brown	610/19.0	1996	Tribe (9)

THE CLUBHOUSE CURMUDGEON

I was a bit chapped in the donkey by McBlunder's website message that *The Clubhouse Curmudgeon* was a bad idea because it would foster too much negativity in the league. I guess I sort of thought that after writing, editing, publishing, and distributing hundreds and hundreds of issues of *From the Bullpen* -- all at my own monetary and time expense -- that I had the right to add new features of my own choosing on occasion, without first polling the entire league to see if it met with everyone's approval. But I guess I was wrong.

Not wanting to heap any more negativity and gloom on Brother Deadman Walking's slumped shoulders, I will shelve *The Clubhouse Curmudgeon* and add a new feature called *The Pony League Pollyanna* to spread nothing but positive vibes and good cheer for the league in general and Stretch McBlunder in particular.

☠ THE PONY LEAGUE POLLYANNA

Gosh, guys, isn't baseball great? And life, isn't it a bowl of peaches with whipped cream on top of it also? I know that Arafat has got the Middle East wrapped up in knots, but don't worry, it'll all come out okay, and everyone involved will be the better for it

FROZEN ROPES

- ◆ How many of you knew that Brother Mouse had Erubiel Durazo in his minor leagues for his 3 HR, 9 RBI night last week? Ouch. Does this bring back any painful memories, SloPay? How many of you knew that the very morning of the Durazo incident, Mouse left a voice mail message for me to

because of their struggle. And oh, about that pending baseball strike, I'm just sure that those nice owners and that nice Don Fehr will get everything patched up and worked out before the August strike date that the Players Union is talking about. And heck, Beav, even if they don't, we'll have plenty of church socials and library club meetings and other swell stuff to focus on in August and September and October even if we don't have baseball.

Next week: *Finding the Good in Hussein.*

THE SPOTTED OWL LIVES ON

After my plea last week for those of you who are fully on line to drop the safety net and go paperless, we were astounded here at the number of you who actually have indicated that it is okay to do so. Not at the number of you who are willing to go paperless, but at the number of you who actually surmounted the usual tidal wave of apathy on such things and got on-line to send a message to us canceling your paper copy of *FTB*. Not one, not two, but seven of you have indicated that you can survive without paper, meaning a nifty \$2.38 a week in postage that can go into Itchie's Unemployed Gamblers' Anonymous*** (UGA) relief fund. Nicely done. If a few more of you can belly up to the bar and do likewise, we can probably save some threatened Northwoods tick from deforestation extinction.

*** Unemployed Gamblers Anonymous was formed not to help unemployed gambling addicts from sending their families further down the river of financial ruin, but to help them find creative ways

tip me off on a couple of blunders made by Magpie in having Jason Marquis and Ben Sheets in his minor leagues for their big outings the night before? The timing on this was eerie. Remember, where the baseball gods are concerned, what goes around, comes around.

- ◆ The **Reds** were led last week not by the league-leading A-Rod, but by seven other players who scored at least 20 points, and all more than A-Rod: Glaus 37.5; Damon 30.0; Lawton 32.5; Jones 33.0; Miller 22.0; Alfonzo 34.0; D'Angelo 28.5. So good were the **Reds** that Magpie didn't even mind leaving Kotsay's 27.0 hitting points in the minors.

- ◆ The **Reds** and **Bombers** have the leading hitting squads in terms of batting average with .289 after seven weeks. The **Redbirds** trail with a team average of .256. The **Reds** also lead in runs scored with 291, while the **Tribe** has the fewest runs scored with 216. The **Blues** lead the league in home runs with 77, while the **Senators** lead in runs batted in with 287.

On the pitching side, the **Cubs*** staff has the best ERA with a 3.21 and the best winning percentage of .683, with a 28-and-13 record. At the other end, the **Blues** have the foulest ERA with 4.57 and a record of 15-and-23, just a smidge better than the **Redbirds'** 16-and-26 record. In terms of saves, the **Chiefs** are running away in this department with 36, while the **Senators**, despite picking up Keith Foulke early on, have only 7. Very possible that there will be a trade in the works.

to appear to their spouses that they are still employed and to keep their daily gambling operations covert. I believe that our Brother Itchie will fit right in

♦ Looking at the free agent wire for this past Sunday, I see that the **'Hoos** ditched Jeromy Burnitz and picked up Brian Daubach. This is the baseball equivalent of trading a gaping head wound for a transected aorta. The **Blues** finally got their fill of Carl "The Truth" Everett, dumping this former star in favor of Brad Fulmer. Magpie picked up Todd Walker, obviously just to try to get in my kitchen, while dropping Terrence Long, who I will soon be picking up for the same reason. And finally, UBob cut Doug Davis and drafted some guy who only has one name: *Garrett*. Kind of like Madonna, or Elvis, or Pink, I guess.

♦ Did anyone see that Roger Clemens just got his 287th career win? On the way, he passed up Ferguson Jenkins, who had 284, then Tony Mullane (who?), who had 285, and then caught Bert Blyleven, who had 287. He might just get his 300th this year.

LET'S PLAY JEOPARDY

How many of you knew that the save rule was created by baseball writer Jerome Holtzman? In a recent issue of *Baseball Digest*, I learned that Holtzman invented the first formula for saves in 1960, during his fourth season as a baseball beat writer, and presented the idea to J.G. Taylor Spink, the late publisher of *The Sporting News*.

As related by Holtzman, he concluded that the ERA was not a good index of a

2. The pitcher enters the game with nobody out in the 9th, a 4-1 lead, no inherited runners, and then gives up two gopher balls before recording three outs for a final score of 4-3. Does this pitcher get a save?
3. The pitcher enters the game in the 7th inning with his team ahead 10-0, and pitches the 7th, 8th and 9th innings, yielding one run for a final score of 10-1. Can this pitcher get a save?

Post your guesses on the Message Board. Answers next week.

TOP TEN LIST OF ITCHIE'S FAVORITE IDLETIME ACTIVITIES

10. Taking advanced taxidermy class at Metro Tech.
9. Running yoga equipment to demanding spouse.
8. Making parade appearances in his Shriner vehicle (click on the [Photo Gallery](#) link).
7. Watching replays of Winter Olympic curling on ESPN3.
6. Donning a sombrero and fake mustache and trying to fool Anne into

reliever's performance because many of the runs scored off a reliever are charged to the previous pitcher. He also felt that the won-loss record was equally meaningless, since the reliever's job, particularly a closer, is to *protect* a lead and not to *win* the game. Holtzman gives the example of Elroy Face of the Pittsburgh Pirates who was 18 and 1 in 1959, still the one-season record for the most victories by a reliever. Because of this incredible won-loss record, Face was heralded almost immediately as the best bullpen pitcher in baseball history. However, Holtzman states in his article that he knew better, and that Face had been much more effective the year before when his won-loss record was 5 and 2. In ten of his 18 victories in 1959, Face gave up the tying or lead run but ended up getting the win because the Pirates had a strong hitting team and rallied for victory while Face was the pitcher of record.

The saves statistic has evolved over time. Let's check your baseball acumen by seeing how many of you know the following:

1. True or false. A reliever enters the game with one out in the 9th, nobody on base, with his team ahead 3-0. He strikes out the last two batters and his team wins the game. The pitcher gets a save.

thinking he is Pablo the pool boy (believe me, she can spot the difference very quickly).

5. Working on his golf game so he can get another shot at beating his personal best 136 at Firethorn if B.T. ever invites him again.
4. Keeping that damn kitchen island clean and uncluttered! ("I need *order* in my life!")
3. Surfing the plastic surgery websites for the best price on a combination hair transplant/total body liposuction.
2. Three-handed Yahtzee with Paul and Ringo (it's just not the same without George).
1. Child care, child care, child care.

NEXT WEEK

Itchie sounds off in a Special Edition of *The Jiggernaut*.****

That's it for this week.

Skipper

**** If, and only if, he can find the time.

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