



## SEVENTH INNING

# Stretch

## Special Edition of **FROM THE BULLPEN**

Official Publication of the Hot Stove League  
Eastern Nebraska Division  
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2002 Season

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Okay, here it is, another issue of the *7th Inning Stretch*, which comes to you because I really was tired of Skipper begging me. And I did not want to incur the type of wrath and invective he threw at Ted earlier this summer....I mean, did I want to be called the "Scum-blues" for the rest of my life? Really, have you ever seen Skipper lash out at somebody like that....what anger... As Itchie would say "He's got some issues" (pronounced 'isshuuuuuuuuuz').

Anyway, Skipper begged me to write this...which further shows his incredible desperation. Does anybody really want to read a rambling discourse from possibly the most boring person in a 5 state area???? Do I really have anything to say? Hell no, but out of a sense of duty and certainly not out of any sense that you all want to know what I think. So here it is, random thoughts about fantasy baseball and life from

Is there really anything better than hunkering down at a watering hole, undisturbed for 4 straight hours of hard drinking, general bull-shitting and discussing of the Save rule, the Hall of Fame and other important baseball issues? Nothing better, which is a rough description of what Ernie, Chuck, Itchie and I did following our recent Saturday night visit to PNC Park in Pittsburg. In all seriousness...it was a great night. We were undisturbed by thoughts of getting to an "emporium of female entertainment." And just drank our asses off. We need more nights like that. Man, when Thielen gets on a roll, there is nothing better.

PNC was great...in my top 5 or 6 parks. A little short on beer vendors and, for a park open onto a river, we really could have used a breeze on a stifling

McBlunder:

OK, my team sucks, what of it?

At least I didn't trade Pedro Martinez. What a truly apathetic bunch we have become. There was a time that when such a horrible trade is put forth, the league members would rise up in a collective anger and dismay and crush any thoughts that a league leader would pick the bones of a league scrub in such a fashion. We would demand a full psychiatric evaluation of the Tribe manager and castigate the Reds manager endlessly for his complete lack of shame. But not this year, hardly a whimper. Really, I don't care how good Giles is, that has to be one of the worst trades ever. Trade Pedro?? Esp. when he was hot hot hot. Yuck.

OK, my team sucks, what of it?

As I related to the boys on the trip, this year the Blues are the Kings of the NO-Decision. I cannot count the number of times teams have blown leads for my sad-sack pitchers, or my boy pitches OK, but gets no support and gets either a big L or a NO-D. Wins are non-existent. Also, STATS is messing with me. According to STATS, my lousy staff has zero, meaning none, meaning zero (0) hitless innings. I mean, I know these guys suck, but I have the best closer in baseball and I know he has had a few innings without a hit. What a crappy staff. The **Pirates** should really feel bad being below this bunch. I have had some

August night, but a great park nonetheless. (And no, no of us were man enough to try "Steel City Beer.")

OK, my team sucks, what of it?

Does anybody wonder if Ernie's kids have really saved all the 10,000 T-shirts, trinkets, bats, balls, hats etc. that he has brought them from various ball parks around the globe?? You have all seen that late Sunday mad dash to find some souvenir that lasts for a week in some closet and then Cheryl quietly throws away. No, that is just cynical of me. They really do love them, Ern.

Scott, I think I now know you well enough to say: "Scott, please come back, we miss you." The trips are great, but not the same without you. Besides, it forces Ernie to share a room with me, subjecting him to some rumored snoring. (Wasn't that some funny stuff in the last *Bullpen*???... In truth, I laughed out loud.)

trying to barehand a ball that really didn't need it, he fumbles (no error by the official scorer). One man on, then one out and who comes to the plate but Raul Mondesi, the poster child for Yankee excess. An \$11 million dollar player, cherry-picked off the Blue Jays, who is in such a good line-up he is batting 7th. The count goes to 2 and 2. He gets his bat broken. He pops one foul just behind the catcher A.J. Hinch, who can't handle the pop...admittedly a tough play, but one that is made for a team going well. Failing to get him out, the pitcher then hangs one and Mondesi promptly sends a moon

guys that I have wanted to get rid of, but I really can't find anything that special on the free-agent list.

At least the **Blues** lead the league in one thing....big-assed pitchers. Between Sabathia and Livan Hernandez, we have got it covered. Those boys have got some big-time butts.

OK, my team sucks, what of it?

I have struggled in this league so much the last few years, it even makes me wonder whether or not 1998, the year of the "Greatest Team Ever," was a fluke.....nah.

Interlude: All of the above was written on Thursday, August 15, late in the afternoon (Ernie had me on a Friday at noon deadline, and even though I had put it off for a few days, the deadline and Ernie's wrath was looming....See paragraph 1 above.) I then went home after a long day of saving the world from injustice and a friend called on the telephone inviting me to that night's Yankee's/Royals game at lovely Kauffman Stadium. Since my house was about to be invaded by 15 eight-year-old Girl Scouts for some craft-making project, I jumped at the chance. Plus the tix were free, as was the beer, for we were headed for the outfield pavilion on somebody's company tab. A beautiful night, free beer, some peanuts and some pretty decent baseball with the scrappy Royals hanging tough with that large market mob from the Bronx, even though they had lost a 14 inning job the night before (with my second favorite player, Mike Sweeney, a former catcher, stealing home... one of our season highlights). And then

shot, 435 feet into the left field bullpen, which is just below where I am standing. I swear to you all, on all that is good and holy, the ball was coming straight at me!!!!!!, in a great metaphoric statement...right at McBlunder...putting it in my face, summing up the 2002 baseball season in one, slow-motion arc, going ever higher and ever farther....and yet unreachable and landing with a plop in the bullpen grass, with me staring at it below.

Oh, yeah, did I mention that the pitcher was the Blues' very own Roberto Hernandez, blowing his third try at his 20th save, moonwalking me back a minus 12. Icing on the cake, my friends, icing on the cake. (Not only did he give up the shot to Mondesi, he was able to stick around and give up another couple of hits and another run.) (By the way, Roberto has a pretty big butt, too.)

God, I love this game.

OK, my team sucks, what of it?

Well for a guy without much to say, sure managed to take up the space.....

See you all at the Winter Meeting. There is always next year...or is there?

Stretch

came the 9<sup>th</sup>. There really is nothing like watching a blown save for your favorite team, especially against your least favorite team. My least favorite Royal, Neifi Perez, starts the inning by

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*Editor's Note:* I guess the standings and point totals don't mean much to a guy whose team is in eleventh place. Allow me, Stretch.

## WEEK 19 STANDINGS

### Upper Division

1.	Skipjacks	6979.0
2.	Reds	6942.5
3.	Cubs*	6857.5
4.	Chiefs	6677.0
5.	Senators	6483.0
6.	Wahoos	6413.0

### Lower Division

7.	Bombers	6374.0
8.	Tribe	6345.0
9.	Redbirds	6105.5
10.	Tigers	6025.5
11.	Blues	5927.0
12.	Pirates	5826.5

## WEEK 19 POINT TOTALS

1.	Wahoos	436.0
(1)	Chiefs	414.0
3.	Senators	405.5
4.	Bombers	380.0
5.	Redbirds	363.0
6.	Tigers	337.5
7.	Pirates	324.5
8.	Blues	313.5
9.	Tribe	310.0
10.	Reds	307.0
11.	Skipjacks	305.0
12.	Cubs*	267.5

## Pitchers

1.	Schilling	588
2.	RJ	542
3.	Pedro	514
4.	Gagne	473
5.	Lowe	462
6.	Smoltz	440
7.	Halladay	425
8.	Moyer	424
9.	Kim	413
10.	Colon	407

## WHO'S HOT - PITCHERS

Pedro	138
RJ	130
Schilling	117
Lowe	101
Moyer	96
Halladay	87
Wagner	83
Percival	66
Smoltz	66

## WHO'S HOT - HITTERS

Sosa	138
Nomar	129
A-Rod	121
Beltre	116
Mags	113
Chipper	109
Tejada	106
Sandberg	101
Luis	101
Lieberthal	100

## Individual Leaders

### Hitters

1.	A-Rod	647
2.	Bonds	566
3.	Sosa	553
4.	Soriano	535
5.	Kent	531
6.	Giambi	513
7.	Iejada	512
8.	Viaddy	511
9.	Mags	505
10.	Garcia	501

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Skipper

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