

The Whale's Tale

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From the Bullpen

Guest Editor: Shamu



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Greetings once again, my esteemed baseball brethren! I absolutely love this new scoring format offered by Yahoo. It seems more like real baseball. You don't have to worry about saves exceeding wins, RBIs exceeding runs and other categories that gave me nothing but headaches. Also, those bogus bonus points are out. Now that our scoring reflects pure baseball and you don't need a degree in math to run a team, it is no coincidence that not only is Denny winning this thing, but he is over 800 points ahead of Dave. We should have abandoned the Bill James scoring format years ago and just played pure baseball!

I offer a few random thoughts about the new format:

John, Bob and Ted, the only cap we have, the innings cap of 1750 is real and is really going to be problem for you guys in September if you keep running 10 or 11 starting pitchers each week. Nobody likes to leave points in their minors, but occasionally, you need to make choices. You guys have used 711, 691 & 684 innings respectively, thru two months of the season. On second thought, don't change a thing and pray for a strike. It worked for me about 15 years ago.

Conversely, Big Guy, Screech, Dave, Jim, & Blongo are managing their innings very judiciously, having used 418, 520, 523, 524 & 524 respectively.

Mitch's innings are right on the projected amount, currently at 553, with myself, Denny & Mouse slightly over at 634, 605 & 604.

Without the other caps, there seems to be a bias towards homeruns and saves. Denny gets to run his big boppers out every night and if they happen to hit a homerun, the points count, just like real baseball.

Dave, on paper your team looks good, your problem is that they just don't score any points. I'm afraid even the Bill James scoring method wouldn't be enough to salvage this team.

On behalf of all economically challenged team owners (OK, I am probably the only one with this crew), I love the free format. I can flip as many players as I want without bumping into my financial cap imposed by my wife. Occasionally, mistakes are made, like ex-Cub Dan Uggla, who is now scoring a ton of points for the Reds, but it still feels good to be managing my team like the Yankees and not the Royals.

How cool is Yahoo's StatTracker. I know if my company is tracking my productivity during the afternoon games on Mondays and Thursdays, my work status is in bigger trouble than Dave's team.

Pujols is on pace for about 80 homeruns, without any apparent cheating, unlike another Skipjack. He is great for baseball and I hope he gets there! Blongo, I understand Albert grew up in KC. What are your scouts looking at?

Standings thru 5/29

1.	Bears	3651
2.	Wahoos	3629
3.	Skipjacks	3600
4.	Cubs	3559
5.	Reds	3516
6.	Redbirds	3460
7.	Bombers	3416
8.	Chiefs	3243
9.	Tribe	3121
10.	Blues	3048
11.	Tigers	3041
12.	Senators	2836

TOP HITTERS (thru Monday, May 29, 2006)

1.	Albert Pujols	Skipjacks	316
2.	Jim Thome	Bombers	262
3.	Travis Hafner	Skipjacks	246
4.	Jason Bay	Reds	246
5.	Chase Utley	Bears	239
6.	Derek Jeter	Redbirds	239
7.	Nick Swisher	Bombers	235

8.	Miguel Tejada	Cubs	234
9.	Morgan Ensberg	Tigers	228
10.	Alex Rodriguez	Redbirds	226

TOP PITCHERS (thru Monday, May 29, 2006)

1.	Brandon Webb	Tribe	248
2.	Jonathan Papelbon	Reds	218
3.	Tom Glavine	Cubs	216
4.	Mike Mussina	Bombers	212
5.	Bronson Arroyo	Wahoos	210
6.	Pedro Martinez	Cubs	208
7.	Curt Schilling	Tigers	200
8.	Chris Capuano	Bears	195
9.	Roy Halladay	Skipjacks	194
10.	Scott Kazmir	Skipjacks	192

See you all in St. Louis in just a few short weeks!

I wanted to share the following interesting article on the best pitched games in the past 25 years:

Here is one man's opinion of the most dominating pitching performances over the last 25 years (what we like to call the "ESPN era"): (Sorry Skipper, Mike Witt's game did not make the list)

1. Kerry Wood fans 20 Astros

In just his fifth major-league start, Wood baffled the Astros with dazzling heat and a dizzying curveball that left Astros hitters lunging at air. True, the weather that May day in 1998 at Wrigley was dark and drizzly, but Wood tied Roger Clemens' record of 20 strikeouts and allowed only an infield single to a good-hitting team while giving up no walks.

2. Nolan Ryan's 7th no-hitter

Bill James invented a gimmick stat called Game Score, which records a pitcher's dominance by giving points for strikeouts and innings pitched, and subtracting points for hits and runs allowed. Anyway, Wood's performance ranks as the best ever for a nine-inning game at 105. Sandy Koufax had 101 in his perfect game. Randy Johnson had 100 last night. Nolan Ryan also scored 101 in his seventh no-hitter, against the Blue Jays in 1991: he struck out 16 and walked two. And he was 44 years old.

3. Roger Clemens shuts down M's in ALCS

The Rocket shut down opinions that he always came up short in big games. With the Yankees leading the 2000 ALCS 2-1 over the Mariners, Clemens was untouchable: he allowed only a seventh-inning double to Al Martin and struck out 15.

4. Randy Johnson's perfect game

The Big Unit fanned 20 Reds in 2001, but gave up a run. In 1997, he twice struck out 19 in game. He once struck out 18 in just eight innings. But this performance was his ultimate: he struck out 13, the second-most ever in a perfect game (Koufax had 14), and nobody hit the ball hard off him all night.

5. Pedro sits down the Yanks

Martinez once pitched nine perfect innings for the Expos (fanning nine before allowing a hit in the 10th inning), but his most dominating performance came in September of 1999 with the Red Sox fighting for a playoff spot. Martinez struck out 313 that year, including 15 or more six times. Against the Yankees, Martinez did allow a Chili Davis home run in the second inning. but he retired the other 27 batters, 17 by strikeout.

6. Jack Morris: 10 shutout innings in Game 7, 1991 World Series

OK, you can argue it was more clutch than dominating -- Morris gave up seven hits and struck out eight -- but 10 scoreless innings with only the entire season on the line. That's enough extra credit to make this list.

7. Rocket fans 20 – again

Clemens became the first man to strike out 20 in a nine-inning game in 1986 against the Mariners (he gave up one run) -- and then became the second man to do it, against the Tigers in 1996. Clemens spaced out five singles and walked none in the shutout.

8. Kevin Brown blows away Astros

The first game of the 1998 Division Series was a battle of titans: San Diego's Kevin Brown (2.38 ERA) vs. Houston's Randy Johnson (10-1, 1.28 with Astros). The Big Unit gave up only two runs, but Brown delivered one of the most dominating playoff performances of all time: 8 IP, 16 K's, 2 hits, 0 runs. (Trevor Hoffman replaced him in the ninth inning.)

9. David Wells' perfect game

Besides Johnson, there have been seven other perfect games during the ESPN era - - Len Barker, Mike Witt (witnessed by Skipper), Tom Browning, Dennis Martinez, Kenny Rogers, Wells and David Cone. Wells' perfect against the Twins in 1998 was the most dominating of the rest: 11 K's with nothing too tough in the field. (Len Barker also fanned 11, but it came against a weak Blue Jays team).

10. Orel Hershiser reels off 10 more scoreless innings

When Hershiser pitched a record 59.1 consecutive shutout innings for the Dodgers in 1988, breaking Don Drysdale's mark of 58.2, he didn't do it by striking out everybody in sight. He did it by inducing weak groundball after weak groundball with his nasty sinker. He set the record with his 6th straight shutout, a 10-inning, four-hit performance against the Padres in his last start of the regular season.