

From the Bullpen

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2006 Season

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Boys,

With 17 weeks of play in the jar, at the unofficial two-third mark of the season, it looks like the **Wahoos** and the **Reds** will be fighting it out with each other for the 2006 crown. Not to slight the **Bombers**, **Bears**, **Cubs*** and **Skipjacks** -- okay, I don't mind slighting the **Skipjacks** -- but it looks like a two-pony race for the championship with a whole pack of nags fighting it out for 3rd. Here are the league standings, front to back, through 17 weeks:

1.	Wahoos	7308.75
2.	Reds	7243.25
3.	Bombers	7081.00
4.	Bears	7072.00
5.	Cubs*	7044.50
6.	Skipjacks	7023.00
7.	Redbirds	6839.00
8.	Chiefs	6823.00
9.	Tigers	6800.75
10.	Blues	6605.50
11.	Senators	6173.50
12.	Tribe	6080.50

Ahhhh, I never knew it could feel so good to be in 11th place. The weight of being in the league bowels is greater than I had imagined.

I would love to be able to provide you with the point totals for the 17th week of play, but because Magpie failed to provide us with the league standings last week, I have no way of calculating these numbers. I suppose he'll be blaming this oversight on the Jager bombs, as well. In the future, I would ask all guest writers to include the standings for the week and the weekly point totals for each team.

While I'm thinking about it, I understand that Itchie has been telling people that his dangerously high liver enzyme levels following the St. Louis trip were not caused by a "doping rou-

tine.” Right. I suppose next we’ll be hearing that somebody spiked his cocktail with the date rape drug, such as happened to poor old Coach Solich.

INDIVIDUAL POINT LEADERS

The top hitters through 17 weeks are as follows:

TOP HITTERS

1.	Chase Utley	504.25	Bears
2.	David Ortiz	494.00	Wahoos
3.	Albert Pujols	481.50	Jax
4.	Carlos Beltran	466.25	Chiefs
5.	Travis Hafner	463.50	Skipjacks
6.	Miguel Tejada	462.00	Cubs*
7.	Manny Ramirez	452.50	Bronx Bombers
8.	David Wright	451.00	Blues
9.	Vernon Wells	443.00	Tigers
10.	Alfonso Soriano	438.00	Skipjacks

TOP PITCHERS

1.	Johan Santana	430.00	Senators
2.	Brandon Webb	423.00	Redbirds
3.	Roy Halladay	410.50	Skipjacks
4.	Francisco Liriano	408.00	Reds
5.	Carlos Zambrano	407.00	Wahoos
6.	John Papelbon	406.00	Reds
7.	Mike Mussina	404.50	Bronx Bombers
8.	Curt Schilling	396.00	Tigers
9.	John Lackey	379.00	Reds
10.	Jeremy Bonderman	368.50	Senators

DUGOUT CHATTER

** If you are wondering why my team is still only in 11th, it’s because I spent the last ten days at Lake Tahoe on a family vacation, and the whole resort area only has about two computers in it. Seriously, we searched high and low for an internet café near our vacation digs, and when we finally found one, we learned that it had three computers, two of which were down, and a line of people waiting to use it which was about ten deep. If anyone is looking for a new business opportunity, this might be a good place to start. In any event, I wasn’t able to make a single transaction on my own during the entire ten-day trip, and ended up leaving a lot of points on the bench, particular from Mr. Overbay.

** During our vacation, we took a drive to Sacramento and we had an opportunity to take in a minor league baseball game between the Sacramento River Cats, a Triple A farm club

of the Oakland A's, and the Colorado Sky Sox, the top farm club of the Colorado Rockies. The game was played July 24 at Raley's Field, which is no great work of architectural wonder, but we did have a chance to see former Husker great Shane Komine pitch his final game for the River Cats before being called up to the Majors for his debut on July 30. Komine had a perfect game going through the first three or four innings, before giving up a blooper single to center field. He ended up pitching a gem of a game, going 8 innings and giving up 4 hits, while striking out 9 and walking not a single man. He has definitely put on a few pounds, and looks ready to begin a nice major league career. Had we known that he was going to debut in Oakland on the following Sunday, we probably would have made the drive to the Bay area that day to see him pitch, but I didn't know about this until seeing the news that evening.

** Also playing for the River Cats that day was former Husker hitting great Dan Johnson, who had been recently demoted by the parent club. With three hearty Husker fans there to cheer him on, Johnson smashed out a monster home run to right field that may still be bouncing in the parking lot, having cleared the fence by about 60 to 70 feet. As Possum might say, "The boy can 'rake.'"

** One final comment from this game in Sacramento. I noticed right away that the Sacramento catcher had about the biggest posterior and thickest chassis that I have ever seen on a baseball player, and I even pointed this out to the boys before I noticed in the program that his name was Jeremy Brown. I then remembered reading about Billy Bean drafting a big, slow-footed catcher from Alabama in the classic work "Money Ball." Sure enough, they are one and the same. As I remember it, Brown was drafted by Bean because he had a very high on-base percentage, in spite of the fact that he has a very ugly, nonathletic-appearing physique. At the time of our game in Sacramento, Brown was only hitting about .240 or so, and his on-base percentage wasn't published in my program, but I am guessing that he has been able to earn a lot of free passes. It will be interesting to see if he makes it up to the parent club and has any impact.

Time to close out this issue and get it off to the boss for typing and posting. Thanks again to Magpie for last week's *Curbside Chronicles*, notwithstanding some of his obvious flawed thinking which went into it.

Skipper