

THE BELLYFLOP

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What a great day! Drafting baseball with your friends, with the anticipation of another fun year, of the greatest sport on earth. Thanks go out again to Dave and Jim for hosting another roaring success. I thought there would be a little bit of a drop off in the festivities when I found out Scott couldn't make it and Denny was damn near suicidal when he thought there wouldn't be any Runza's, but thanks to Jim, it went off without a hitch.

I know it seemed like it took a long time but I was impressed how quickly everyone drafted, considering the time we spent going over the new rules. I draft like I play golf, fast, polo fast. I can't believe anyone would ever consider playing golf without a cart. I know some people claim to play for the exercise. Please. It's like bowling, if I had to go down there and pick up the pins every time I would never do it.

I'm starting to feel a little pressure to finish in the money, but I'm operating under a severe handicap. Jody, has made clear in no uncertain terms that she wants no part of hosting a goofy party for a bunch of 40 and 50 year old kids. So there you have it, the cats out of the bag. Every year I'm forced to draft a bunch of injury prone slackers and deadbeats just to keep my little Desert Flower happy.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE COWBOYS GONE

Once again Stretch has proven that he is truly the poster boy of our league. He makes the trip each and every year and this year when his son was to play in his first Cricket or Jai Lai game or whatever it was, he gave him a quick Dutch rub and a firm handshake and sent him off. Alone, all by himself, solo. Why? Because dad was busy. Damn right dad was busy! It almost makes me tear up thinking about it. So here's a big salute to you Stretch and hardy HOO RAA, you've earned it.

THE DRAFT

Isn't it funny what starts a cattle call during the draft? Johnny took a starting pitcher with the first pick of the second round which started a run that saw 6 of the next 7 picks being starting pitchers. Mouse took Mariano Rivera with the 5th pick of the 3rd round which started a run that consisted of 4 of the next 7 picks being Closers. After Skipper took Victor Martinez with the 3rd pick of the second round I knew it wouldn't be long before we would see that run on catchers. I immediately noticed Johnny tapping his pen on the desk, a little sweat starting to form on his upper lip, fidgeting in his seat and I knew it was coming, he slid his chair back and stampeded up to the draft board and took Jason Varitek. 93 picks later. **93 PICKS LATER.** Some people lead, some follow, some just draft off on their own.

As for my pick of Felix Hernandez in the first round, I'm not going to waste anytime defending it. I'll let him do it for me. I know it was surprising to Skip and I won't make him wait any longer. Dave, Felix Hernandez is a pitcher for the Seattle Mariners. If this league is won on preparation (which I don't think has ever happened) then he's in BIG trouble, if it's won on luck, then he'll be just fine. You know you're in trouble when you silently mouth "Who?" to yourself after players that are picked after the 6th round and actually say it out loud at players being drafted after the 12th. Looks like Cheryl's not too keen on hosting a party either.

Tirebiter finally wised up and drafted A-Rod the second best player in the Majors with the second pick, instead of taking Vlad the Impaired like he did last year. If he would have switched that duo around last year he probably would not have had to pay off his 100 year old bet or whatever it was with Scott. I secured a similar bet with Scott, only ours is for a lifetime, which is a win, win for me. If I die without ever winning this thing it will take a better bunch of lawyers than you guys to wring 100 dollars out of my estate, unless you can work some magic on my Ace Rent to Own furniture or my 1989 Suzuki Sidekick.

Big Guy set himself up for what I'm sure will be the biggest roller coaster ride of any of us. He drafted a lot of talent with a lot of ifs, big ifs. It makes it almost impossible to accurately forecast what kind of a season he'll have.

Johnny drafted another fine team, with the only glaring weakness being a lack of a true closer, but we have to figure in the luck factor, not just normal luck, we're talking OJ Simpson luck.

I'm not going to make any predictions this year because it just seems so futile. There are too many variables that come into play, the Free Agent drafts, and the day to day management of our teams and of course the injury bug. When I first tried to sign up on Yahoo it took me 20 minutes to find a user name that wasn't being used, in fact I got so disgusted that I tried the name of the banker on Petticoat Junction, Homer Bedlow **AND IT WAS TAKEN!** Ok I'm thinking of a word, oh yeah that's it, **BULLSHIT!** Are there that many people in the world who even know who Homer Bedlow is, let alone happen to be involved with fantasy baseball at Yahoo? I've already forgot my password. Twice. So, I hope my starters can get me through the season. I did get on Sunday to participate in the Free Agent draft; I even waited until my computer clock said it was 10:00pm. When I finally got to add my players I noticed there were already 3 teams ahead of me. Big Guy did you mean

10:00pm Pakistan time? I think it's going to be a hard year. It appears that with this Yahoo program it will award the manager who pays the most attention to his team. If that is the case, I would never bet against Ted. His legendary attention to detail will serve him well. Now, Denny on the other hand?

TRUE STORY

I'm sure by now you are all aware of what happened to me the last time we visited the mean streets of St Louis. Somewhere on the subway ride to our hotel while I was chumming for deadbeats, someone pick-pocketed my wallet and the 300 hundred dollars of fun money that I brought along for the trip, so I had to rely on Denny's good nature and his ATM card to make it through the trip and get back home (this might be the reason that Denny isn't making the trip this year, he's probably afraid the trip will cost double again).

After I got home I had to deal with humiliation and inconvenience of replacing everything of importance that had been stolen, canceling credit cards, getting a new drivers license and all that fun stuff. On that following Monday I called the DMV and told them the story and asked them what I had to do to get a duplicate of my driver's license. The lady asked me if I had a copy of my Birth Certificate, which I did and told me that should do it. So I grabbed my Birth Certificate and headed for the DMV, of course there was a long line and of course the line I picked ended up being 3 times slower than the other one. When I got to the front of the line I repeated my sad tale and she asked me if I had a copy of my Birth Certificate which I immediately pulled out, this is where it starts to get weird. She said she needed another form of ID with my signature on it, so I pulled out a credit card that I had not taken with me on the trip, Nope, she said it couldn't be a credit card. So, I pulled out a medical insurance card. Nope, she said that technically that was the same as a credit card. By now, the line is about 12 deep behind me, and if you think being turked scares me, I could feel 12 sets of eyes burning a hole through the back of my head. She asked me if I had any cancelled checks. Sure, I've got lots of them, but I failed to pack them in my shorts for my trip to the DMV. So she asked me if I had a Hollywood Video card. Really. So I straightened my hat, checked to see if my fly was unzipped and asked her if I was on camera? (The guy behind me loved that line). Camera? No, why would you be on camera? Because this has got to be a joke, are you telling me that I have to have a Hollywood Video card to validate my Birth Certificate? I guess I'm attacking this from the wrong angle, I thought I would replace my credit cards first and work my way down. My Hollywood Video card ranks between my Andy Griffiths rerun watchers membership club card and my laminated card of the Klingon alphabet. Don't you have a record of my license with my picture on it? Yes, but that's not the way we do it here. So I told her to get her supervisor who pretty much told me the same thing. So I did what any other red blooded American male would do. I gave up. I told her I didn't have to get my license renewed for another 2 years, so I would try to wing it without a license until then.

After about 2 months it got the best of me and I knew I was going to be in the area of the other DMV on West O Street, so I went there loaded for bear. I had my Birth Certificate, my passport, cancelled checks, Hollywood Video card and a Blockbuster card just to be sure. I went up to the counter told the lady my story and she asked me if I had a Birth Certificate. Yup, right here. She said great, just take a seat over there and we'll take your picture and

get you on your way. **What the?** It took about 10 minutes. Does this stuff happen to any of you guys? I swear I'm going to write a book.

I like this new format, I'm officially done and I can spend the rest of the summer trying to remember my password. Good luck to everyone and see ya in St Louie.

Underbelly