

# From the Bullpen

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**NEBRASKA**  
Hot Stove League



2006 Season

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## IT'S LIKE DÉJÀ VU, ALL OVER AGAIN

### SKIPJACKS' SUNDAY SURGE PROPELS TEAM PAST CHIRPERS FOR WEEK 1 LEAD

Brothers,

Painful though it may be for me to report it, Itchie's **Skipjacks** used a 100+-point Sunday to rocket past the **Redbirds** for the Week 1 lead in the HSL standings. Trading punches like they did all of last season, the **Jax** and the **'Birds** picked up right where they left off last October, occupying the top two spots in the league. Good golly, please tell me that we won't have to see these two names on the top of the leaderboard all season long, as in '05.

### WEEK 1 STANDINGS

1.	Skipjacks	457.25
2.	Redbirds	441.75
3.	Reds	421.50
4.	Blues	421.25
5.	Wahoos	409.25
6.	Tigers	397.75
7.	Cubs*	386.75
8.	Chiefs	363.50
9.	Tribe	356.75
10.	Senators	346.25
11.	Bears	324.50
12.	Bronx Bombers	320.25

### TOP HITTERS

1.	Chris Shelton	Redbirds	69.50
2.	Edgar Renteria	Blues	48.00

3.	Travis Hafner	Skipjacks	47.00
4.	Garrett Atkins	Senators	42.75
5.	David Wright	Blues	42.75
6.	Lance Berkman	Wahoos	41.25
7.	Hideki Matsui	Bombers	40.50
8.	Jim Thome	Bombers	39.00
9.	Scott Rolen	Skipjacks	38.75
10.	Albert Pujols	Skipjacks	38.50

#### TOP PITCHERS

1.	Curt Schilling	Tigers	49.00
2.	Brad Penny	Chiefs	48.00
3.	Jake Westbrook	Reds	47.00
4.	Randy Johnson	Tigers	40.50
5.	Derrick Turnbow	Redbirds	39.50
6.	Roy Oswalt	Chiefs	39.00
7.	Vinny Padilla	Skipjacks	38.00
8.	Mike Mussina	Bombers	37.50
9.	Jonathan Papelbon	Reds	37.00
10.	Rich Harden	Reds	36.50

#### AROUND THE HORN

The **Skipjacks** continue to ride the old Luck Locomotive as they vie for a sixth Hot Stove League title. Third Round pick Travis Hafner is leading the Bigs in Yard Balls, while 19th Rounder Greg Maddux is pitching like he did in his Cy Young days. The **Redbirds** are looking solid and Jim Ed is looking like a genius with his 10th Round pick of leading scorer Chris Shelton, although his 8th Round pick of Scott Podsednik (minus 12.5 points to date) doesn't look quite as cerebral. Meanwhile, the Reds are looking like serious contenders with hot starts by 16th Round pick Michael Barrett and 19th Round selection Jake Westbrook. However, 11th Rounder Jeff Francoeur (also at minus 12.5 points) isn't looking like such a brilliant selection at this point.

The **Blues** are off to a fast start (4th place) after one week with David Wright and Johnny Gomez out of the box in a hurry. Fourth Round pick Bartolo Colon is off to a slow start after his Cy Young Award last year. The 5th place **Wahoos** are getting plenty of points from Lance Berkman and David Ortiz, but top reliever Joe Nathan isn't finding his way into many save opportunities these days. The **Tigers** are off to a decent start on the strength of the old arms of Randy Johnson and Curt Schilling, and center fielder Vernon Wells looks like he has returned to his form of a few years ago.

Shamu and his 7th place **Cubs\*** are loving what they are seeing out of Pedro so far, but less so with John Smoltz and the rest of the **Cubs\*'s** pitching staff. The 8th place **Chiefs** are waiting for Vladdy to warm up a bit, but are optimistic that things are headed in the upward direc-

tion for this team. Over on the reservation, the **Tribe** is struggling to find its identity, as the much coveted Brad Wilkerson is struggling down in Texas and Underbelly has his usual pitching woes again this season.

The **Senators** find themselves in 10th place after the first week, and once again I can see that my team suffers from a serious shortage of power. My leading home run hitter has 2 home runs to date, and I am now regretting the heavy emphasis on New York Mets on my roster. Over in the **Bear Cave**, SloPay once again finds himself deep in the Lower Division at this early stage of the race. Chris Young has been a pleasant surprise for the **Bears** so far, but Denny has very little else to be happy about so far. And finally, the **Bronx Bombers** find themselves mired in the cellar after one week, and other than Jim Thome, Mouse thus far has very little to cheer about. But, hey, it's early, men.

### OPENING DAY

Joe and Will and I kept our Opening Day streak alive with a trip to Arlington to watch the visiting Red Sox pummel the Rangers and their starting pitcher, Kevin Millwood. Schilling started on the mound for the Red Sox, and looked like the Schilling of old. We were also treated to a towering home run by Big Pappy. What a great day to be alive.

### GAME OF SHADOWS

I just finished reading the excellent book on Balco and Barry Bonds, *Game of Shadows*. If anyone is looking for a reason to cheer against Barry Bonds -- and who isn't -- dig into this book for some startling revelations. After reading this book, it would be surprising to learn that Barry Bonds has a single friend in this world. He is not a nice person.

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That's it for this issue, boys. Next week we will look forward to hearing from Tirebiter, our featured guest writer.

Skipper