

From the Bullpen

"The People's Newspaper"

For People Who Want to Know the Real Truth



The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have little. --[Franklin D. Roosevelt](#)

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek. --[Barack Obama](#)

It is amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit. --[Harry S. Truman](#)

It's all about pitching. --[David D. Ernst](#)

Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country. --[John F. Kennedy](#)

Most importantly I never sent classified material on my email and I never received any that was marked classified. --[Hillary Clinton](#)

Let me say something that may not be great politics. And that is that the American people are sick and tired of hearing about your damn emails. --[Bernie Sanders](#)

2017 Campaign

Edition No. 30

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PAWESOME CLINCHES, TIREBITER CINCHES, SLOWPAY PINCHES, SHAMU FLINCHES

While there are still three days to go in the 2017 Hot Stove League campaign, PAwesome has effectively clinched his second consecutive Hot Stove League title, and his sixth overall. Although a week and a half ago Tirebiter's team had closed the gap between the **Redbirds** and the **Wahoos** to less than 200 points and appeared to have a fighting chance, after last Sunday's performance by the **Wahoos** (127 pitching points, somewhere around 169 points total) and after Jim Ed's **Chirpers** mashed their beaks up against the Saves Ceiling, the race was unofficially over. As of today's edition of *From the Bullpen*, the **Wahoos** hold a 343.7-point lead over the **Redbirds**. Congratulations to PAwesome on another successful Hot Stove League campaign.

Tirebiter is/was man enough to cinch up his trousers [F1] and call PAwesome to concede the crown to him, not an easy thing to do when you consider that

Jim Ed was vying for his first sip from the Championship Cup after achieving also-run status in the league a record six seasons, now seven. Of course, being a Hawkeye fan all of his life has prepared him well for the old *close but no cigar* mantle. The Squawkeyes' last-play loss to the Nittany Lions last Saturday was a microcosm of Jim Ed's remarkable tenure in the vaunted Hot Stove League. But I'm not dogging you, Jimmy, as I am well aware of the 2000+-point differential between the **Redbirds** and the **Senators** this season; I'm just trying to put your bridesmaid 2017 finish in the proper perspective. Congratulations on another fine season of Hot Stove League play.

Although it's not yet a done deal, it appears likely that SloPay's **Bears** will end the season in the final money spot of third place, narrowly eclipsing the flinching **Cubs**. How appropriate that Mama *Bear* would outwork the Baby *Cub*. If he does pull off this coup, SloPay will be pinching himself all season, and wondering why it took him half of the season to get his players to start performing at a championship level.

As for the rest of you also-rans, we'll wait until next issue to discuss where you finished up in the standings and what it all means in the grand scheme of life.

As is customary, we will include here the standings through 25 weeks, followed by the weekly point totals during Week 25.

STANDINGS THROUGH WEEK 25 ENDING 9/24/17

1	Wahoos	12454.7	-	0
2	Redbirds	12169.3	285.4	0
3	Cubs	11849.1	605.6	+1
4	Bears	11823.6	631.1	-1
5	Chiefs	11717.7	737.0	0
6	Monarchs	11500.8	953.9	0
7	Tigers	11497.1	957.6	0
8	Tribe	11238.6	1216.1	0
9	Hot Mess	11155.0	1299.7	+1
10	Bombers	11113.1	1341.6	-1
11	Bums	11030.7	1424.0	0
12	Blues	10855.1	1599.6	0
13	Senators	9677.8	2776.9	0

POINT TOTALS FOR WEEK 25

1	Chiefs	569.1
2	Wahoos	542.9
3	Redbirds	508.2
4	Cubs	505.6
5	Monarchs	457.1
6	Hot Mess	456.2
7	Tigers	455.7
8	Tribe	424.1
9	Bears	419.1
10	Senators	397.4
11	Bums	381.7
12	Blues	368.0
13	Bombers	315.0

As also is customary, we will include now the individual leaderboards for hitters and pitchers, as well as the customary “Who’s Hot” and “Who’s Not” data for you information geeks:

TOP 25 PITCHERS THROUGH 25 WEEKS

1	Chris Sale	Redbirds	849.0
2	Corey Kluber	Chiefs	840.0
3	Max Scherzer	Wahoos	800.0
4	Clayton Kershaw	Blues	710.0
5	Zack Greinke	Tigers	684.0
6	Luis Severino	Bears	666.0
7	Carlos Carrasco	Tribe	659.0
8	Jacob deGrom	Cubs	655.0
9	Gio González	Senators	652.0
10	Justin Verlander	Tigers	645.0
11	Stephen Strasburg	Cubs	636.0
12	Ervin Santana	Tigers	617.0
13	Carlos Martínez	Wahoos	590.0
14	Robbie Ray	Bombers	588.0
15	Chris Archer	Bombers	562.0

16	Marcus Stroman	Redbirds	560.0
17	Alex Wood	Wahoos	545.5
18	Drew Pomeranz	Monarchs	541.0
18	Gerrit Cole	Bears	541.0
20	José Quintana	Wahoos	532.0
21	Yu Darvish	Wahoos	519.0
22	Jeff Samardzija	Cubs	518.0
23	Lance Lynn	Redbirds	509.0
24	Jake Arrieta	Blues	503.0
25	Aaron Nola	Monarchs	500.0

WHO'S HOT -- PITCHERS

1	Max Scherzer	Wahoos	66.0
2	Nick Pivetta	Wahoos	58.0
3	Chase Anderson	Senators	50.0
4	Dan Straily	Chiefs	47.0
5	Chris Sale	Redbirds	46.0
6	José Quintana	Wahoos	46.0
7	Lucas Giolito	Chiefs	46.0
8	Marcus Stroman	Redbirds	43.0
9	Clayton Kershaw	Blues	41.0
10	Mike Montgomery	Hot Mess	40.0
11	Mike Leake	Tribe	39.0
12	Cole Hamels	Cubs	38.0
13	Justin Verlander	Tigers	37.0
14	Eduardo Rodríguez	Tribe	37.0
15	Erasmo Ramirez	Bums	36.0
16	Clayton Richard	Senators	35.0
17	Brent Suter	Chiefs	34.0
18	Blake Snell	Bears	34.0
19	Kevin Gausman	Redbirds	34.0
20	Gio González	Senators	34.0
21	Corey Kluber	Chiefs	34.0
22	Jake Odorizzi	Redbirds	34.0
23	Jason Vargas	Blues	34.0
24	Madison Bumgarner	Tigers	33.0
25	Jhoulys Chacin	Cubs	33.0

WHO'S NOT - PITCHERS

1	Lance Lynn	Redbirds	-23.0
2	Jon Lester	Bums	-14.0
3	Zack Greinke	Tigers	-10.0
4	Bartolo Colón	Senators	-9.0
5	Rafael Montero	Bums	-7.0
6	Sal Romano	Bears	-6.0
7	Daniel Gossett	Blues	-5.0
7	Ben Lively	Monarchs	-5.0
9	Homer Bailey	Bombers	-4.0
9	Taijuan Walker	Bears	-4.0
9	Felix Hernandez	Bombers	-4.0
12	Masahiro Tanaka	Hot Mess	-3.0
13	Zack Godley	Tribe	-2.0
14	Chris Stratton	Bears	-1.0

TOP 25 HITTERS THROUGH WEEK 25

1	Charlie Blackmon	Wahoos	753.9
2	Giancarlo Stanton	Bears	743.8
3	Joey Votto	Tigers	742.0
4	Aaron Judge	Hot Mess	738.0
5	Paul Goldschmidt	Monarchs	730.2
6	José Altuve	Redbirds	691.7
7	Nolan Arenado	Tigers	690.9
8	Anthony Rizzo	Tribe	666.0
9	Kris Bryant	Wahoos	637.2
10	José Ramírez	Tribe	636.6
11	Marcell Ozuna	Tribe	631.5
12	Francisco Lindor	Cubs	615.4
13	Brian Dozier	Senators	613.1
14	Nelson Cruz	Blues	612.5
15	Justin Upton	Bombers	605.9
16	José Abreu	Bombers	604.4
17	Jonathan Schoop	Bums	604.3
18	Eric Hosmer	Blues	594.4
19	Edwin Encarnación	Hot Mess	593.0
20	Anthony Rendon	Chiefs	583.5
21	Elvis Andrus	Hot Mess	577.6
22	Justin Smoak	Bombers	569.7
23	Daniel Murphy	Redbirds	569.6
24	Mookie Betts	Bums	566.3
25	J.D. Martinez	Chiefs	563.8

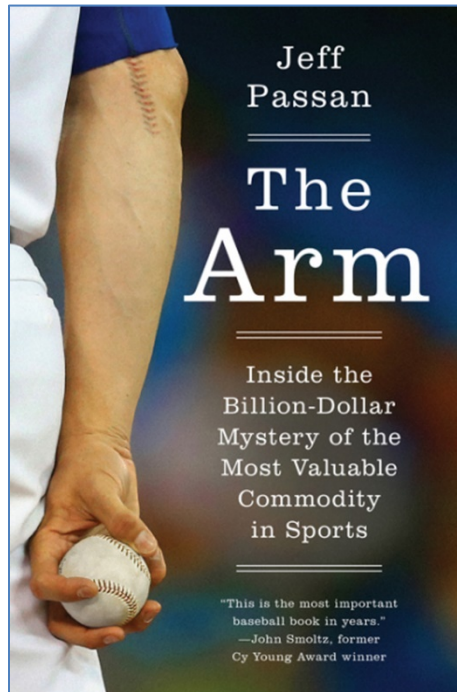
WHO'S HOT - HITTERS

1	Aaron Judge	Hot Mess	54.0
2	Giancarlo Stanton	Bears	51.0
3	Marcell Ozuna	Tribe	49.0
4	Justin Bour	Redbirds	47.4
5	Dexter Fowler	Wahoos	42.5
6	Nelson Cruz	Blues	41.0
7	Ian Kinsler	Tigers	38.2
8	Jorge Polanco	Tribe	37.8
9	J.D. Martinez	Chiefs	36.5
10	Jed Lowrie	Tigers	35.7
11	David Peralta	Wahoos	35.0
12	Starling Marte	Chiefs	34.6
13	José Ramírez	Tribe	34.3
14	Tommy Pham	Senators	33.5
15	Matt Carpenter	Chiefs	32.6
16	Justin Upton	Bombers	31.6
17	Aaron Altherr	Cubs	31.5
18	Mookie Betts	Bums	31.2
19	Dee Gordon	Senators	31.0
19	Yoán Moncada	Cubs	31.0
21	Francisco Lindor	Cubs	30.9
21	César Hernández	Hot Mess	30.9
23	Wil Myers	Bums	30.8
24	Brian Dozier	Senators	30.7
25	Kris Bryant	Wahoos	30.6

WHO'S NOT - HITTERS

1	Dominic Smith	Bears	-4.0
2	Eugenio Suárez	Tribe	-3.7
2	Corey Seager	Bums	-3.7
4	Odúbel Herrera	Cubs	-2.0
5	Mark Trumbo	Bombers	-1.5
6	Carlos Santana	Bears	-1.2
7	Matt Holliday	Blues	-1.0
8	Dustin Pedroia	Bums	-0.8
9	Joey Gallo	Bums	-0.7
10	Josh Bell	Chiefs	-0.6
11	Alex Avila	Bombers	-0.5
11	Yasiel Puig	Redbirds	-0.5

BOOK REPORT:
The Arm
By Jeff Passan



A couple of days ago I finished reading one of the best baseball books I have ever come across, simply titled *The Arm*, written by Yahoo! writer Jeff Passan, and published in 2016. Subtitled *Inside the Billion-Dollar Mystery of the Most Valuable Commodity in Sports*, the Boston Globe called it "The best baseball book of the year." True that. Maybe even the best baseball book of a generation.

I actually have PAwesome to thank for mentioning the book on the Message Board, which Linda saw and then listened to it on tape, then raved about it to me, which led me to pick up a copy at the book store. I started reading it up in Montreal after I finished "A Walk in the Woods" by Bill Bryson, about which we will save for another day, and I tore through *The Arm* like Brother Sinclair at the Valentino's Grand Buffet, devouring huge chunks of delicious fare but still ravenous for more. I was actually eager to wake up in the morning and consume a few pages with my first cup of coffee every day, and it was one of those books that I later began pacing myself toward the end because I did not want to be done with it. To me, *that's* the sign of a great book.

So what's it all about, you ask? The focus of the book is on the proliferation of pitching elbow injuries caused by the Major League's love affair with high octane pitchers who can deliver it in the high 90s or even in triple digits, and

the over-emphasis on the radar gun at the youth levels, not to mention the child abuse of young pitchers by their fanatical parents and coaches. As explained by Passan, the number of Tommy John surgeries being performed on kids who haven't even reached the age of majority has risen dramatically, and there are many pitchers who have reinjured their elbows after a Tommy John surgery and gone back for a second round under the knife. In fact, the book tracks the second TJ surgeries and rehabilitation of one former (Todd Coffey [F2]) and one current (Daniel Hudson) Major League pitcher, and documents the physical and mental torture that each has had to endure.

If the name Todd Coffey doesn't ring a bell, it's because he was a middle reliever with only middling success but who ultimately pitched 8 different seasons for the Cincinnati Reds, Milwaukee Brewers, Washington Nationals and Los Angeles Dodgers. If you get the chance, YouTube Todd Coffey *Running In From The Bullpen*, and you will get a kick out of watching this behemoth sprinting from the bullpen to the mound, which was his calling card back in his playing days.

Personally, the most fascinating part of the book to me was Passan's chapter [F3] about baseball in Japan and the reverence that they have for it in the Land of the Rising Sun, leading to the extreme overuse of young pitching arms by their coaches at their celebrated annual tournaments, known as "Spring Koshien" and "Summer Koshien." A case in point that is chronicled by Passan in the book is that of a young Japanese hurler by the name of Tomohiro Anraku, pictured below:



Anraku threw 772 pitches over 9 days at the 2013 Spring Koshien. Passan also touches on the case of Yu Darvish, who blew out his elbow and spent the entire 2015 season rehabilitating from his Tommy John surgery.

The Arm is such a terrific piece of work that each and every one of you will want to buy it and read it, and I say that even though I will not be receiving any commission from the sales. If your appetite is not yet whet enough, we are including hereinbelow the Prologue to this book for your further edification and enjoyment.

PROLOGUE

FOR 130 YEARS, PITCHERS HAVE thrown a baseball overhand, and for 130 years, doing so has hurt them. Starter or reliever, left-handed or right-handed, short or tall, skinny or fat, soft-tossing or hard-throwing, old or young—it matters not who you are, what color your skin is, what country you're from. The ulnar collateral ligament (UCL), a stretchy, triangular band in the elbow that holds together the upper and lower arms, plays no favorites. If you throw a baseball, it can ruin you.

When the UCL breaks, only one fix exists: Tommy John surgery. Over the past decade, the procedure became a frequently uttered curse word as pitcher after pitcher felt the pain of a torn ligament, huffed anesthesia a few days later, and woke up an hour after that with a fresh scar and an exasperating rehabilitation schedule. Some of the biggest names in Major League Baseball needed Tommy John. Even more kids, some barely teenagers, blew out their elbows and underwent surgery. At the highest levels of the game, a panic swelled. Not only were the arms of current pitchers failing, elite players from the next generation were going down before they could sign their first professional contract.

The culture of baseball seemed backward to me. The more I thought about the pervasiveness of Tommy John, the more I understood it needed demystifying. I heard stories of kids getting Tommy John surgery at fourteen years old. (They were true.) And of kids who underwent Tommy John even when they weren't hurt, because they thought it would help them throw harder. (Neither the stories nor the implication was true.)

Mostly, I wanted to understand this for my son. He was five years old. He loved baseball. He wanted to play catch every day. He was hooked, like his dad. And the more I heard stories from other parents—of their sons getting hurt or boys they know quitting baseball because their arms no longer worked—the more I needed to figure out what was happening to the arm.

So I spent three years traveling the world to find out. I saw a mad scientist in rural Florida who believes he can fix the arm and a couple of geniuses in Chicago who saw fit to spend more than \$150 million on one. I went to Seattle to watch a human being throw a baseball almost 106 miles per hour and to Kansas City to see a teenager flirt with 100. I flew to Arizona to get Sandy Koufax's opinion on the greatest sports orthopedist ever, asked that orthopedist how he came up with Tommy John surgery in the first place, and learned from Tommy John himself how he once worried that his hand was going to be permanently clawed because of it. I sat in laboratories, saw doctors tend to bodies living and dead, went halfway across the globe to a place where the problem is even greater, read medical studies, and scavenged through data, all to answer two vital questions:

How did baseball fail the pitching arm, and what can be done to save it?

Eventually, I found two pitchers who allowed me to infiltrate their lives at their nadir so I could fully understand what happens when an arm—and a career—blows up. Daniel Hudson was twenty-five when his UCL burst. He threw differently from most, his arm slot a low three-quarters, his release almost like a slingshot, each pitch stoking the cauldron's fire. Even so, the Arizona Diamondbacks had never bothered tinkering with his mechanics. A pitcher is fine until he isn't. The other pitcher, Todd Coffey, was a right-handed reliever with a personality as big as the scar on his elbow. He needed two Tommy John surgeries, the first when he was nineteen, the next at thirty-one. A study on two-time Tommy John patients showed that the ligament from Coffey's first surgery lasted the longest of any pitcher who needed another surgery. This didn't guarantee his return from the second. Nothing can.

I marveled at Hudson's and Coffey's daily existence, which toggled between triumph and failure. They balanced loneliness and tedium with excitement and redemption. Optimism got into daily head-on collisions with reality. These two men are the faces of every arm. And yet before I tell their stories, it's important to understand the arm's place in the rest of the baseball world and what's at stake beyond billions of dollars and World Series titles.

The problem is not going away. The sport's foremost doctors believe it's worsening. The current generation of pitchers is lost, the product of a broken system, their arms ticking time bombs. If that doesn't change, today's kids will be the next casualties. They throw more and harder at younger ages than ever. Do the same thing again and again and again, and no matter how natural—like many things about the arm, the idea that throwing is an unnatural motion is a complete myth—it will break.

I don't want that to be my son. I don't want that to be your son. Baseball knows it needs top-to-bottom change. The \$1.5 billion Major League Baseball spends annually on pitchers' salaries is five times more than the combined cost of every starting quarterback in the NFL. It exceeds the top two hundred NBA salaries put together. When I call the pitching arm the most valuable commodity in sports, it is not an exaggeration. And yet the most overanalyzed sport in the world, with an industry of bright minds studying its intricacies, loses half a billion dollars a year to injuries. More than 50 percent of pitchers end up on the disabled list every season, on average for two months—plus, and one-quarter of major league pitchers today wear a zipper scar from Tommy John surgery along their elbows.

People in the sport call arm injuries an epidemic. Solutions do exist. They aren't easy, and they'll take the sort of overhaul baseball seems loath to implement, but they can happen. Because one thing I now know is that for all of its travails, all the heartache it can cause, all the frustration left in its wake, the arm is capable of wondrous things.

* * * * *

That's it for this issue, amigos. Have a great weekend, and **Go Huskers!** against the fighting Illini tonight!

Skipper

[FN1] Although there's not that far to go with them.



[FN2]



[FN3] Blithely named "Land of the Rising Arm Injury Rate," Chapter 11.