

# FROM THE BULLPEN

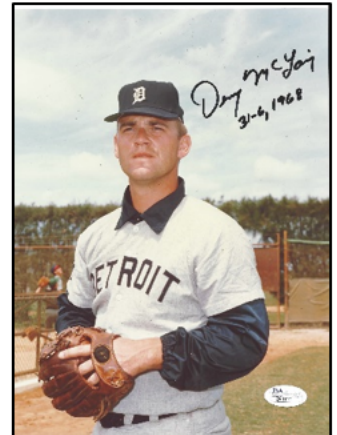
## The Nebraska Hot Stove League



of the Summer of '68,  
"The Year of the Pitcher"



Bob Gibson



Denny McLain

2018 Campaign

Edition No. 8

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**'BIRDS AND BUMS BEAK TO CHEEK;  
CHIEFS ON WARPATH;  
SKIPJACKS SPAWNING;  
WAHOOS HEADED FOR WHITE CLAY;  
TIGERS TOOTHLESS;  
TRIBE TOASTY, BUT STILL TOAST**

Gentlemen:

As we move into the dog days of summer, the fierce competition between Jim Ed's **Red-birds** and Magpie's **Bums** continues to be the lead story of the Hot Stove League season. Jim's **'Birds** pecked their way to 540.9 points for the week, more than a C-note better than the **Bums'** 435.6 points, vaulting the **'Birds** back into the lead through 19 weeks of play.

And don't look now, but the **Chiefs** have battled their way into the conversation, cranking out 524.4 points for the week to cement their 3rd place position in the standings, now less than 300 points (276.9) off the lead, no longer to be ignored.

Elsewhere, the once moribund **Skipjacks** posted a league best 567.7 points for the week to bounce past the **Senators** and **Blues** and into 8th place, with their sights set on moving up even higher in the standings. And let's not forget Underbelly, whose **Tribe** posted a second-best total of 541.0 points for the week, allowing them to, sigh, remain in the cellar, but with hopes of moving out.

Bringing up the rear during Week 19 were the **Tigers** (383.4), the **Bombers** (366.2) and the (gasp) **Wahoos** (355.1), surprising no one except these three dreamers.

Here are the full standings through Week 19 of play:

1	Redbirds	8813.2	-
2	Bums	8734.0	79.2
3	Chiefs	8536.3	276.9
4	Monarchs	8423.0	390.2
5	Cubs	8397.2	416.0
6	Wahoos	8377.9	435.3
7	Bears	8268.9	544.3
8	Skipjacks	8222.2	591.0
9	Blues	8120.2	693.0
10	Senators	8041.8	771.4
11	Tigers	7911.7	901.5
12	Bombers	7538.4	1274.8
13	Tribe	7394.1	1419.1

And here are the point totals for the 19th week of play:

1	Skipjacks	567.7
2	Tribe	541.0
3	Redbirds	540.9
4	Chiefs	524.4
5	Monarchs	517.6
6	Senators	507.1
7	Cubs	454.9
8	Bums	435.6
9	Blues	431.0
10	Bears	427.5
11	Tigers	383.4
12	Bombers	366.2
13	Wahoos	355.1

Below are the top 25 hitters for the 2018 season, and the top hitters for Week 19:

#### TOP 25 HITTERS FOR SEASON

1.	José Ramírez	Redbirds	577.7
2.	Mike Trout	Wahoos	562.8
3.	J.D. Martinez	Skipjacks	536.2

4.	Francisco Lindor	Blues	525.8
5.	Mookie Betts	Monarchs	520.0
6.	Nolan Arenado	Bears	506.6
7.	Manny Machado	Blues	483.8
8.	Alex Bregman	Bums	476.0
9.	Matt Carpenter	Wahoos	475.3
10.	Javier Báez	Monarchs	466.6
11.	Trevor Story	Bears	462.4
12.	Paul Goldschmidt	Cubs	456.5
13.	Freddie Freeman	Bears	454.6
14.	Andrew Benintendi	Redbirds	451.8
15.	Aaron Judge	Bombers	443.7
16.	Eugenio Suárez	Bums	443.2
17.	Christian Yelich	Blues	434.8
18.	Bryce Harper	Chiefs	432.6
19.	Khris Davis	Skipjacks	420.0
20.	Giancarlo Stanton	Bums	415.0
21.	Nick Markakis	Senators	414.1
22.	Shin-soo Choo	Tigers	411.2
23.	Rhys Hoskins	Chiefs	410.2
24.	Scooter Gennett	Senators	404.7
25.	Ozzie Albies	Chiefs	404.5

#### TOP 25 HITTERS FOR WEEK 19

1.	Matt Carpenter	Wahoos	57.6
2.	Rougned Odor	Tribe	51.7
3.	José Abreu	Tigers	48.2
4.	José Ramírez	Redbirds	47.5
5.	Javier Báez	Monarchs	47.2
6.	Bryce Harper	Chiefs	44.0
7.	Trevor Story	Bears	41.7
8.	Christian Yelich	Blues	39.5
9.	Whit Merrifield	Tigers	38.8
10.	Nelson Cruz	Cubs	38.5
11.	Nick Ahmed	Bombers	36.4
12.	Steve Pearce	Skipjacks	36.2
T13.	Brian Dozier	Cubs	35.6
T13.	Evan Longoria	Monarchs	35.6
15.	Andrew McCutchen	Senators	35.5
16.	Mark Trumbo	Senators	35.0
17.	Khris Davis	Skipjacks	34.5
18.	Trea Turner	Tribe	34.2
19.	Nolan Arenado	Bears	33.7
T20.	Max Kepler	Chiefs	33.6

T20.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Tribe	33.6
22.	Kole Calhoun	Skipjacks	33.5
23.	Carlos González	Wahoos	32.6
24.	Joey Gallo	Chiefs	32.1
25.	Eugenio Suárez	Bums	31.8

José “Lightning in a Bottle” Ramírez continues to lead the way for the **Red-birds**, and is the top hitter through 19 weeks of play with 577.7 points, just a smidge ahead of Mike Trout of the **Wahoos** with 562.8. The top hitter for the week was Matt Carpenter of the **Wahoos** with 57.6 points, followed by Rougned Odor of the **Tribe** with 51.7 points.

Below are the top 25 pitchers for the 2018 season, and the top pitchers for Week 19:

#### TOP 25 PITCHERS FOR SEASON

1.	Max Scherzer	Tigers	666.0
2.	Justin Verlander	Blues	642.0
3.	Chris Sale	Bums	620.0
4.	Gerrit Cole	Wahoos	577.0
5.	Corey Kluber	Redbirds	572.0
6.	Trevor Bauer	Redbirds	567.0
7.	Aaron Nola	Monarchs	559.0
8.	Jacob deGrom	Skipjacks	542.0
9.	Luis Severino	Bombers	510.0
10.	Zack Greinke	Cubs	496.0
11.	Charlie Morton	Redbirds	486.0
12.	Patrick Corbin	Tigers	482.0
13.	Blake Snell	Bears	474.0
14.	James Paxton	Bombers	472.0
15.	José Berríos	Tribe	468.0
16.	Rick Porcello	Chiefs	458.0
17.	Miles Mikolas	Skipjacks	445.0
18.	Carlos Carrasco	Senators	424.0
19.	Sean Manaea	Senators	419.0
20.	Marco Gonzales	Tribe	411.0
21.	Mike Clevinger	Senators	401.0
22.	Lance McCullers Jr.	Bears	396.0
23.	David Price	Chiefs	389.0
24.	Sean Newcomb	Wahoos	383.0
25.	Ross Stripling	Bears	374.0

### TOP 25 PITCHERS FOR WEEK 19

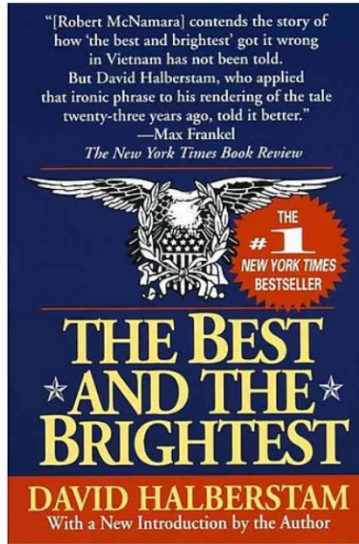
1.	Trevor Cahill	Skipjacks	63.0
2.	Tanner Roark	Tigers	62.0
3.	Jon Gray	Chiefs	60.0
4.	James Paxton	Bombers	55.0
5.	Edwin Jackson	Skipjacks	52.0
6.	Masahiro Tanaka	Cubs	50.0
T7.	Walker Buehler	Redbirds	46.0
T7.	Rick Porcello	Chiefs	46.0
T9.	David Price	Chiefs	44.0
T9.	Aaron Nola	Monarchs	44.0
T11.	Corey Kluber	Redbirds	43.0
T11.	Wade Miley	Senators	43.0
T11.	Justin Verlander	Blues	43.0
T11.	Freddy Peralta	Senators	42.0
T15.	Zack Godley	Wahoos	41.0
T15.	Carlos Carrasco	Senators	41.0
17.	Jack Flaherty	Bums	40.0
T18.	Zack Wheeler	Bears	39.0
T18.	Matthew Boyd	Cubs	39.0
T20.	Tommy Milone	Skipjacks	38.0
T20.	Shane Bieber	Redbirds	38.0
22.	Nathan Eovaldi	Bums	37.0
23.	Vince Velasquez	Tribe	36.0
T24.	Anibal Sánchez	Blues	35.0
T24.	Will Smith	Chiefs	35.0

On the hill, Max Scherzer of the **Tigers** continues to be the top point guy with 666.0 (that can't be good), ahead of second place Justin Verlander of the **Blues** with 642.0 points, ahead of Chris Sale of the **Bums** with 620 points. For the week, it was Trevor Cahill of the **Skipjacks** pacing the way with 63.0 points, followed by Tanner Roark of the **Tigers** with 62.0.

### THE TRIP

Our junket to Kansas City is still set to take place the weekend of August 24-26. I plan to talk with Stretch about the details, and one of us will get back to you shortly. Promises, promises. I know.

## BOOK REPORT: THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST



I am finally almost finished with *The Best and the Brightest*, the seminal work of David Halberstam on our country's ill-advised entry into and its prolonged and painful extraction from that quagmire known as *The Vietnam War*. First published in 1969, Halberstam's 720-page masterpiece is as well-researched and thoughtfully written a book as I have happened across in a long time. Still, with more than 700 pages of small print and a surfeit of detail on the background of the war and of the bright young men of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations who were largely responsible for it, it was a bit of a slog to get through and has taken me the better part of two months to digest. But so worth it.

In *The Best and the Brightest*, Halberstam expertly defines some of the events which led to the American involvement in Vietnam:

The fall of Chiang Kai-shek's China to Mao Tse Tung and communism.

The campaign of terror led by Red-baiter Joe McCarthy, creating a chilling fear of being soft on communism.

The humiliating if not devastating experience of de Gaulle's France in Indochina.

But mostly, Halberstam attributes our disastrous experience in Vietnam to the collective mistakes and miscalculations by some of the brightest people in the country, namely: Dean Rusk, Kennedy's Secretary of State; Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense; Mac Bundy (former Dean of Harvard), National Security Advisor to both Kennedy and Johnson; the "other" Bundy (William), Foreign Affairs Advisor; and Chester Bowles, Undersecretary of State, among others. The author concludes that these men with their remarkable collection of brain power, impressive though they were, were *too* confident, *too* used to winning, *too* accustomed to success and, as he put it, *too clever by half*, and that this is what ultimately led to the escalation of the Vietnam War from America providing advice and advisors, to the placement of American GIs in Vietnam, to surgical bombing, and ultimately, to massive bombing, to the deployment of more and more and more troops into a virtual meat-grinder in this completely unnecessary war on the Vietnamese's home turf.

After Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 and LBJ's ascension to the presidency, it is fascinating to read about LBJ's interactions and relationships with the Best and the Brightest. In one famous exchange between Johnson and his mentor Sam Rayburn--after Johnson expressed his amazement at just how bright these young turks in the Kennedy administration were--Rayburn famously exclaimed: *"Well, Lyndon, you may be right and they may be every bit as intelligent as you say, but I'd feel a whole lot better about them if just one of them had run for sheriff once."*

After LBJ was elected on his own in 1964, trouncing the ultra conservative Barry Goldwater [FN1], he began to flex his muscles and used his legendary powers of persuasion to nudge many of the Best and Brightest more and more over to his position that there was a need to unleash the unmatched force of the United States military on the North Viet Cong. In the end, the only real dissenter, and the lone consistent "No" vote, was George Ball, who later would be praised for his clear vision of what lay ahead.

Halberstam does a great job of painting the portrait of LBJ, a graduate of the Southwest Texas State Teachers College in San Marcos, who always thought himself the intellectual inferior of the Best and Brightest men, even though Johnson was in fact one of the smartest and cagiest presidents the Oval Office has ever seen. He was also one of the homeliest and the crudest [FN 2]. A couple of his salty quotes from the book are as follows:

*(He) couldn't pour piss out of a boot if the instructions were written on the heel.*

*(About J. Edgar Hoover) Better to have him inside the tent pissing out, than outside the tent pissing in.*

If any of you should want to borrow my tattered copy of *The Best and the Brightest*, let me know and I will gladly loan it to you.

### **PERDUE STADIUM: HOME OF THE DELMARVA SHOREBIRDS**

Last week while on assignment in Eastern Virginia, I made my way across the Chesapeake Bay via the 23-mile Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel, and up to Salisbury, Maryland, to take in a game between the **Delmarva Shorebirds** and the **Lakewood BlueClaws**. This (the Shorebirds) single A farm club of the Baltimore Orioles is located in the area known as the Eastern Shore. At first I was looking for the location of a town by the name of Delmarva, but then discovered that the ballpark is actually located in Salisbury, Maryland. It was only after I arrived at Perdue Stadium and toured the Eastern Shore Hall



of Fame located in that building that I realized that Delmarva stands for *Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia*, the three-state region which supports this Shorebird team. Duh.

Anywho, I was having a fine time at the ballpark on Monday night of last week, enjoying the scenery and the atmosphere and the ballpark food, when what to my wandering eyes should appear but a Shorebird player in the on-deck circle with the name Ripken emblazoned across his back. Could it be, I thought? Well, of course, it had to be. I mean, how many other Ripkens do any of you know, anyway?



So I checked my handy Google information finder (probably not exactly the correct technical term) and learned that Ryan Ripken is a 24-year-old player for the Shorebirds, and is of course, the son of Cal Ripken, Jr., grandson of Cal Ripken, Sr., and nephew of Billy Ripken.

I was frankly surprised that Cal Ripken's son was still in Class A at the ripe old age of 24, but shortly it became apparent why. Although he looks very much like Cal Jr. in the face, it appears that Ryan inherited his athletic genes from his mother, if his general physical appearance at the plate and his unimpressive batting swing are reliable indicators. I watched as he popped up meekly in his first at-bat, then hit a seeing-eye single in his second time at the plate, only to be thrown out trying to stretch a single into a double.

Checking again with Google, Ryan Ripken played college baseball with the University of South Carolina, and then was drafted in the 20th round of the



2012 draft by the Orioles. He has gone on to post the following statistics during his rather lackluster Minor League campaign to date:

## Register Batting

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Year	Age	AgeDif	Tm	Lg	Lev	Aff	G	PA	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	CS	BB	SO	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	TB	GDP	HBP	SH	SF	IBB
<a href="#">2014</a>	20	0.3	<a href="#">Nationals</a>	<a href="#">GULF</a>	Rk	WSN	16	55	51	5	8	1	0	1	6	0	0	4	10	.157	.218	.235	.453	12	0	0	0	0	0
<a href="#">2015</a>	21	1.5	<a href="#">Nationals</a>	<a href="#">GULF</a>	Rk	WSN	28	98	92	4	23	6	2	1	8	0	1	5	15	.250	.296	.391	.687	36	4	1	0	0	1
<a href="#">2016</a>	22		2 Teams	2 Lgs	A--A	WSN	101	399	374	21	75	13	2	1	34	1	0	20	73	.201	.241	.254	.495	95	13	1	0	4	0
<a href="#">2016</a>	22	0.5	<a href="#">Hagerstown</a>	<a href="#">SALL</a>	A	WSN	43	170	163	10	31	5	0	1	21	0	0	5	38	.190	.212	.239	.451	39	6	0	0	2	0
<a href="#">2016</a>	22	0.9	<a href="#">Auburn</a>	<a href="#">NYPL</a>	A-	WSN	58	229	211	11	44	8	2	0	13	1	0	15	35	.209	.262	.265	.527	56	7	1	0	2	0
<a href="#">2017</a>	23	1.9	<a href="#">Aberdeen</a>	<a href="#">NYPL</a>	A-	BAL	51	198	188	14	54	8	0	3	24	2	2	9	54	.287	.323	.378	.701	71	6	1	0	0	0
<a href="#">2018</a>	24	2.7	<a href="#">Delmarva</a>	<a href="#">SALL</a>	A	BAL	88	343	322	30	80	8	0	6	35	0	0	18	59	.248	.289	.329	.619	106	11	1	0	1	0
All Levels (5 Seasons)							284	1093	1027	74	240	36	4	12	107	3	3	56	211	.234	.275	.312	.586	320	34	4	0	5	1
A (2 seasons)							131	513	485	40	111	13	0	7	56	0	0	23	97	.229	.264	.299	.563	145	17	1	0	3	0
A- (2 seasons)							109	427	399	25	98	16	2	3	37	3	2	24	89	.246	.290	.318	.609	127	13	2	0	2	0
Rk (2 seasons)							44	153	143	9	31	7	2	2	14	0	1	9	25	.217	.268	.336	.604	48	4	1	0	0	1

## Register Fielding

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Year	Age	Tm	Lg	Lev	Aff	G	GS	CG	Inn	Ch	PO	A	E	DP	Fld%	RF/9	RF/G	PB	WP	SB	CS	CS%	IgCS%	PO
<a href="#">2014</a>	20	<a href="#">Nationals</a>	<a href="#">GULF</a>	Rk	WSN	1B	12	12	90.0	103	98	4	1	10	.990	10.20	8.50							
<a href="#">2015</a>	21	<a href="#">Nationals</a>	<a href="#">GULF</a>	Rk	WSN	1B	24		178.2	194	180	9	5	13	.974	9.52	7.88							
<a href="#">2016</a>	22	2 Teams	2 Lgs	A--A	WSN	1B	83	81	702.1	737	669	55	13	50	.982	9.28	8.72							
<a href="#">2016</a>	22	<a href="#">Hagerstown</a>	<a href="#">SALL</a>	A	WSN	1B	39	38	324.1	327	298	24	5	23	.985	8.94	8.26							
<a href="#">2016</a>	22	<a href="#">Auburn</a>	<a href="#">NYPL</a>	A-	WSN	1B	44	43	378.0	410	371	31	8	27	.980	9.57	9.14							
<a href="#">2017</a>	23	<a href="#">Aberdeen</a>	<a href="#">NYPL</a>	A-	BAL	1B	46	42	364.1	431	394	31	6	32	.986	10.50	9.24							
<a href="#">2018</a>	24	<a href="#">Delmarva</a>	<a href="#">SALL</a>	A	BAL	1B	55	55	471.1	463	433	24	6	32	.987	8.73	8.31							
<a href="#">2018</a>	24	<a href="#">Delmarva</a>	<a href="#">SALL</a>	A	BAL	DH	33	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0		0.00								
All Levels (5 Seaso...							1B	220	190	1806.2	1928	1774	123	31	137	.984	9.45	8.62						

## Teams Played For

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Year	Age	Tm	Lg	Lev	Aff	Stint	From	To
<a href="#">2014</a>	20	<a href="#">GCL Nationals</a>	<a href="#">Gulf Coast League</a>	Rk	WSN		2014-06-21	2014-07-14
<a href="#">2015</a>	21	<a href="#">GCL Nationals</a>	<a href="#">Gulf Coast League</a>	Rk	WSN		2015-07-21	2015-08-28
<a href="#">2016</a>	22	<a href="#">Hagerstown Suns</a>	<a href="#">South Atlantic League</a>	A	WSN		2016-04-07	2016-06-01
<a href="#">2016</a>	22	<a href="#">Auburn Doubledays</a>	<a href="#">New York-Pennsylvania League</a>	A-	WSN		2016-06-17	2016-09-05
<a href="#">2017</a>	23	<a href="#">Aberdeen IronBirds</a>	<a href="#">New York-Pennsylvania League</a>	A-	BAL		2017-06-20	2017-09-02
<a href="#">2018</a>	24	<a href="#">Delmarva Shorebirds</a>	<a href="#">South Atlantic League</a>	A	BAL		2018-04-05	2018-08-08

In short, if he wasn't named Ripken, he probably wouldn't still be in baseball, and he probably would not have been drafted. I wish Ryan Ripken nothing but the best, but I fear that his professional baseball career is soon to be at an end. In that unhappy event, perhaps he can team up with Pete Rose, Jr. and sell baseball memorabilia from their fathers. Sad.

Okay, enough said. Have a great weekend, all.

Skipper

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FN 1 Johnson's defeat of Goldwater came much easier than expected, with LBJ garnering 61.1% of the popular vote, the highest in history for a U.S. president. In spite of what Trump says.

FN 2 Mac Bundy absolutely hated it when Johnson would call him into the water closet to discuss policy or deliver information while the president was taking care of business on the presidential throne.