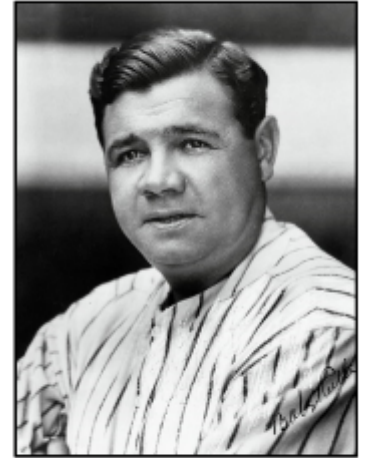




Babe Ruth

7-time World Series Champion
 Career Batting Average: .342
 Career Home Runs: 714
 Career Pitching Record: 94-46
 Career ERA: 2.28
 1st in All-Time slugging percentage: .690
 1st in All-Time OPS: 1.164



2019 Campaign

Edition No. 18

August 22, 2019

REDBIRDS SOAR

Jim Ed's quest for a first Hot Stove League title continues unabated, with the **Crimson Chirpers** tallying a heroic total of 619.2 points during Week 21 of the season, expanding their lead over the 2nd-place team (this week, the **Wahoos**) to a chasmic 405.7 points. While not necessarily insurmountable, a 400-plus point margin is going to be plenty difficult to breach, particularly with only five weeks left to play.

The **Bombers** were the top team for Week 21 with a remarkable total of 641.0 points, bringing a wide smile to Mouse's face. At the other end of the universe, the **Senators** (predictably) suffered a near collapse with only 398.1 points, bringing a similarly-wide grin to the face of the green-with-envy **Boiling Teapot**, and perhaps a few others, as the Skipper's team dropped with a resounding thud into 4th place, 476.2 points off the pace and seemingly out of contention. Oh, well, it was fun while it lasted.

Here are the standings through Week 21 and the point totals for Week 21, top to bottom.

STANDINGS THRU WEEK 21 ENDING AUGUST 18, 2019

1	Redbirds	10398.0	-
2	Wahoos	9992.3	405.7
3	Monarchs	9964.8	433.2
4	Senators	9921.8	476.2
5	Bums	9806.2	591.8
6	Skipjacks	9629.3	768.7

7	Bombers	9418.4	979.6
8	Chiefs	9332.2	1065.8
9	Bears	9151.4	1246.6
10	Cubs	9068.0	1330.0
11	Tigers	8957.2	1440.8
12	Tribe	8767.1	1630.9
13	Blues	8289.6	2108.4

**POINTS FOR WEEK 21
ENDING AUGUST 18, 2019**

1	Bombers	641.0
2	Redbirds	619.2
3	Cubs	608.6
4	Chiefs	572.5
5	Wahoos	537.3
6	Bears	520.0
7	Monarchs	507.1
8	Blues	492.3
9	Tigers	442.2
10	Skipjacks	441.8
11	Bums	440.6
12	Tribe	411.7
13	Senators	398.1

Here are the customary individual leaderboards and Who's Hot and Who's Not lists for Week 21:

TOP 25 PITCHERS

1.	Justin Verlander	Bums	713.0
2.	Gerrit Cole	Senators	651.0
3.	Shane Bieber	Senators	595.0
4.	Zack Greinke	Chiefs	588.0
5.	Charlie Morton	Redbirds	581.0
6.	Hyun-Jin Ryu	Cubs	572.0
7.	Jacob deGrom	Skipjacks	562.0
8.	Stephen Strasburg	Bombers	545.0
9.	Max Scherzer	Wahoos	538.0
10.	Lance Lynn	Bums	536.0
11.	Clayton Kershaw	Tigers	528.0
12.	Luis Castillo	Monarchs	521.0
13.	Patrick Corbin	Senators	515.0
14.	Mike Minor	Bums	509.0

	Lucas Giolito	Tribe	509.0
16.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	497.0
17.	Walker Buehler	Skipjacks	493.0
18.	Aaron Nola	Wahoos	492.0
19.	Madison Bumgarner	Bombars	485.0
20.	José Berríos	Monarchs	478.0
21.	Mike Fiers	Senators	468.0
22.	Mike Soroka	Redbirds	458.0
23.	German Márquez	Tribe	456.0
24.	Chris Sale	Chiefs	455.0
25.	Matthew Boyd	Wahoos	452.0

WHO'S HOT -- PITCHERS

1.	José Quintana	Redbirds	66.0
2.	Jack Flaherty	Bears	57.0
3.	Zack Greinke	Chiefs	55.0
4.	Madison Bumgarner	Bombars	48.0
5.	Clayton Kershaw	Tigers	42.0
6.	Yusei Kikuchi	Tribe	40.0
7.	Jon Gray	Chiefs	39.0
8.	Homer Bailey	Blues	38.0
	Iván Nova	Bombars	38.0
10.	Griffin Canning	Bears	35.0
	Aaron Nola	Wahoos	35.0
	James Paxton	Bombars	35.0
	Eduardo Rodríguez	Skipjacks	35.0
14.	Yu Darvish	Bombars	34.0
	Dereck Rodríguez	Skipjacks	34.0
16.	Ryan Yarbrough	Tigers	33.0
17.	Max Fried	Skipjacks	32.0
	Jacob deGrom	Skipjacks	32.0
19.	Justin Verlander	Bums	31.0
	Domingo Germán	Wahoos	31.0
21.	Joey Lucchesi	Bears	30.0
	Andrew Heaney	Bears	30.0
	Charlie Morton	Redbirds	30.0
	Joe Musgrove	Tigers	30.0
25.	Mike Clevinger	Monarchs	29.0

WHO'S NOT -- PITCHERS

1.	Ariel Jurado	Blues	-31.0
2.	Cole Hamels	Monarchs	-21.0
3.	Julio Teheran	Bums	-19.0

4.	Chase Anderson	Wahoos	-16.0
5.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	-13.0
6.	John Means	Skipjacks	-12.0
7.	Luis Castillo	Monarchs	-11.0
8.	Seth Lugo	Bums	-8.0
9.	Wade Miley	Bums	-7.0
10.	Alex Young	Bombers	-5.0
11.	CC Sabathia	Monarchs	-3.0
	Aníbal Sánchez	Skipjacks	-3.0
13.	Ross Detwiler	Bears	-2.0
	Sean Reid-Foley	Bums	-2.0
	Zack Wheeler	Bears	-2.0
	Walker Buehler	Skipjacks	-2.0
	Jordan Lyles	Tribe	-2.0
18.	Reynaldo López	Blues	-1.0
	Miles Mikolas	Bums	-1.0
	Tyler Beede	Bombers	-1.0
	Gio Gonzalez	Blues	-1.0
	Chris Paddack	Wahoos	-1.0
23.	Drew Pomeranz	Bears	-0.5

TOP 25 HITTERS

1.	Mike Trout	Monarchs	659.0
2.	Cody Bellinger	Bombers	636.1
3.	Christian Yelich	Redbirds	628.7
4.	Rafael Devers	Blues	600.0
5.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Redbirds	589.7
6.	Freddie Freeman	Monarchs	588.6
7.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	583.8
8.	Alex Bregman	Bears	576.8
9.	Mookie Betts	Chiefs	559.3
10.	Anthony Rendon	Cubs	553.2
11.	Pete Alonso	Tribe	550.6
12.	Carlos Santana	Blues	546.9
13.	Ketel Marte	Skipjacks	536.3
14.	Trevor Story	Wahoos	536.1
15.	Nolan Arenado	Blues	529.3
16.	Josh Bell	Chiefs	527.1
17.	DJ LeMahieu	Monarchs	524.7
18.	Juan Soto	Blues	518.0
19.	Charlie Blackmon	Skipjacks	510.2
	Eduardo Escobar	Wahoos	510.2
21.	J.D. Martinez	Bums	507.2
22.	Kris Bryant	Tigers	497.9

23.	Josh Donaldson	Monarchs	497.1
24.	Marcus Semien	Redbirds	496.9
25.	Anthony Rizzo	Bears	495.2

WHO'S HOT -- HITTERS

1.	Rafael Devers	Blues	67.7
2.	Carlos Santana	Blues	61.7
3.	Gleyber Torres	Redbirds	61.1
4.	Nick Ahmed	Cubs	55.6
5.	Adam Eaton	Bums	55.0
6.	Kyle Seager	Cubs	54.3
7.	Matt Chapman	Bums	50.1
8.	Wilmer Flores	Tigers	50.0
9.	Trevor Story	Wahoos	49.1
10.	J.T. Realmuto	Redbirds	48.8
11.	Ryan McMahon	Bombers	48.3
	Pete Alonso	Tribe	48.3
13.	James McCann	Bombers	46.1
	Michael Brantley	Tigers	46.1
15.	José Ramirez	Cubs	46.0
16.	Josh Donaldson	Monarchs	45.4
17.	Victor Robles	Bums	44.9
18.	Bryce Harper	Senators	44.7
19.	Cody Bellinger	Bombers	44.0
20.	Justin Turner	Skipjacks	43.8
21.	Miguel Sanó	Bums	43.3
22.	DJ LeMahieu	Monarchs	43.2
23.	Marwin Gonzalez	Wahoos	43.0
24.	Trea Turner	Cubs	42.6
	Amed Rosario	Blues	42.6

WHO'S NOT -- HITTERS

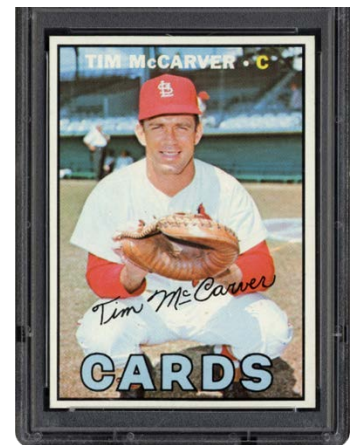
1.	Kevin Kiermaier	Skipjacks	-5.5
2.	Khris Davis	Bombers	-2.0
3.	Alex Gordon	Monarchs	-1.5
4.	Yadier Molina	Blues	-1.4
5.	Whit Merrifield	Bums	-1.3
6.	Joc Pederson	Wahoos	-0.9

MORE FROM LATE INNINGS

I have not yet finished *Late Innings*, in part because I don't want to be done with it, but let me share with you a couple of great excerpts about the great Bob Gibson,¹ written from Angell's perch at Spring Training in Florida in 1980, where he interviewed former Gibson backstop Tim McCarver:



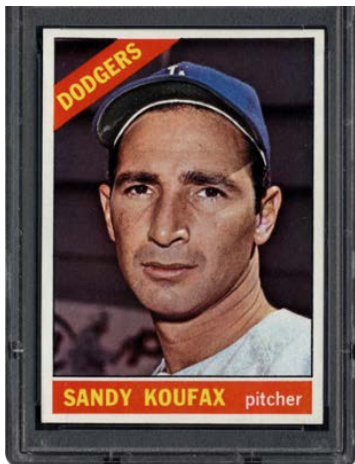
On the afternoon of October 2nd, 1968--a warm, sunshiny day in St. Louis--Mickey Stanley, the Detroit Tiger shortstop, singled to center field to lead off the top of the ninth inning of the opening game of the 1968 World Series. It was only the fifth hit of the game for the Tigers, who by this time were trailing the National League Champion St. Louis Cardinals by a score of 4-0, so there were only minimal sounds of anxiety among the 54,592 spectators--home-town rooters, for the most part--in the stands at Busch Stadium. The next batter, the dangerous Al Kaline, worked the count to two and two and then fanned, swinging away at a fastball, to an accompanying roar from the crowd. A moment later, there was a second enormous cheer, louder and more sustained than the first. The Cardinal catcher, Tim McCarver, who had straightened up to throw the ball back to his pitcher, now hesitated. The pitcher, Bob Gibson, a notoriously swift worker on the mound, motioned to his battery mate to return the ball. Instead, McCarver pointed with his gloved hand at something behind Gibson's head. Gibson, staring uncomprehendingly at his catcher, yelled, "Throw the goddam ball back, will you! C'mon, c'mon, let's go!" Still holding the ball, McCarver pointed again, and Gibson, turning around, read the illuminated message on the center-field scoreboard, which perhaps only he in the ballpark had not seen until that moment: "Gibson's fifteenth strikeout in one game ties the all-time World Series record held by Sandy Koufax." Gibson, at the center of a great tureen of noise, dug at the dirt of the mound with his spikes and then uneasily doffed his cap. ("I hate that sort of thing," he said later.) With the ball retrieved at last, he went to work on the next Tiger, Norm Cash, a left-handed batter, who ran the count to two and two, fouled off several pitches, and then struck out, swinging at a slider. Gibson, a long-legged, powerfully built right-hander, whose habitual aura of glowering intensity on the mound seemed to deepen toward rancor whenever his club was ahead in the late stages of a game, now swiftly attacked the next Detroit hitter, Willie Horton. Again



¹ Who, I am sad to say, is reportedly battling pancreatic cancer, according to a recent article in the Omaha *World Herald* about great athletes from North Omaha.

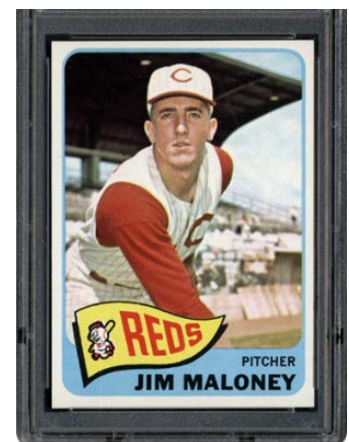
the count went to two and two and stuck there while Horton fouled off two or three pitches. Gibson stretched and threw again, and Horton, a righty batter, flinched away from the pitch, which seemed headed for his rib cage, but the ball, another slider, broke abruptly away under his fists and caught the inside corner of the plate. Tom Gorman, the home-plate umpire, threw up his right hand, and the game was over. McCarver, talking about this moment not long ago (he is now a radio and television broadcaster with the Phillies), said, "I can still see that last pitch, and I'll bet Willie Horton thinks to this day that the ball hit him--that's how much it broke. Talk about a batter *shuddering!*"

Bob Gibson's one-game World Series record of seventeen strikeouts stands intact, and so do my memories of that famous afternoon. In recent weeks, I have firmed up my recollections by consulting the box score and the inning-by-inning recapitulations of the game, by watching filmed highlights of the play, and by talking to a number of participants, including Gibson himself. (He had had no idea, he told me, that he was close to a record that afternoon. "You're concentrating so hard out there that you don't think of those things," he said.) Gibson seemed to take absolute charge of that game in the second inning, when he struck out the side on eleven pitches. By the end of four innings, he had run off eight strikeouts. Not until I reexamined the box score, however,

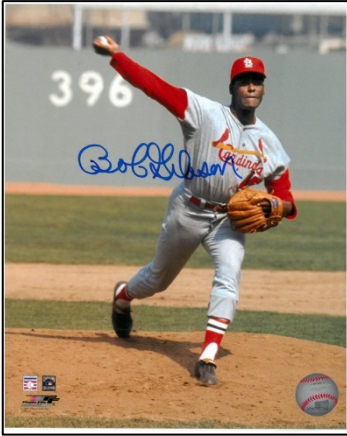


did I realize that there had been only two ground-ball outs by the Tigers in the course of nine innings. This, too, must be a record (baseball statistics, for once, don't tell us), but the phenomenally low figure, when taken along with the seventeen strikeouts, suggests what kind of pitching the Tiger batters were up against that afternoon. Most National League batters in the nineteen-sixties believed that Gibson's fastball compared only with the blazers thrown by the Dodgers' Sandy Koufax (who retired in 1966 with an arthritic elbow) and by the Reds' Jim Maloney. Gibson's pitch flashed through the strike zone with a unique, up-

ward-moving, right-to-left sail that snatched it away from a right-handed batter or caused it to jump up and in at a left-handed swinger--a natural break of six to eight inches--and hitters who didn't miss the ball altogether usually fouled it off or nudged it harmlessly into the air. The pitch, which was delivered with a driving, downward flick of Gibson's long forefinger and middle finger (what pitchers call "cutting the ball"), very much resembled an inhumanly fast slider, and was often taken for such by batters who were unfamiliar with his stuff. Joe Pepitone, of the Yankees, concluded the All-Star Game of 1965 by fanning on



three successive Gibson fastballs and then shook his head and called out to the pitcher, "Throw me that slider one more time!" Gibson, to be sure, did have a slider--a superior breaking pitch that arrived, disconcertingly, at about three-quarters of the speed of the fastball and, most of the time, with exquisite control. Tim McCarver, who caught Gibson longer than anyone else, says that Gibson became a great pitcher during the summer of 1966 (his sixth full season in the majors), when he achieved absolute mastery of the outside corner of the plate while pitching to right-handed batters and--it was the same pitch, of course--the inside corner to left-handed batters. He could hit this sliver of air with his fastball or his slider with equal consistency, and he worked the opposite edge of the plate as well. "He *lived* on the corners," McCarver said. A third Gibson delivery was a fastball that broke downward instead of up and away; for this pitch, he



held the ball with his fingers parallel to the seams (instead of across the seams, as was the case with the sailer), and he twisted his wrist counterclockwise as he threw--"turning it over," in mound parlance. He also had a curveball, adequate but unextraordinary, that he threw mostly to left-handers and mostly for balls, to set up an ensuing fastball. But it was the combination of the devastating slider and the famous fastball (plus some other, less tangible assets that we shall get to in time) that made Gibson almost untouchable at his best, just as Sandy Koufax's down-diving curveball worked in such terrible (to hitters) concert with his illustrious upridding fastball.

One of the chapter names in *Late Innings in Wilver's Way*, the focus of which is Willie "Pops" Stargell and his 1979 "We are Family" Pittsburgh Pirates. In the Fall of 1979 I was in my final semester of study in the Construction Management Department at UNL, primarily focused on completing my graduation requirements and so my memories of the 1979 Fall Classic are scant. I mainly recall that the Pirates fell behind 3 games to 1 and had to win Game 5 in Pittsburgh and then defeat the heavily-favored Orioles of Earl Weaver in Games 6 and 7 in Baltimore. I did not remember that the weather for this WS was perhaps the worst in the annals of the October Classic, with low temperatures and frequent precipitation taking the starch out of both player and fan, and leading to numerous fielding miscues. For example, Game 1 which was originally scheduled for October 9, had to be postponed due to a wintry mix of rain and snow. When it was played the following night, the temperature at game time was 41 degrees, the coldest in the history of the Fall Classic until the 1997 World Series. A steady rain fell throughout the contest and no doubt contributed to the six total



errors that were made, three by each team. The Orioles won by the score of 5 to 4, scoring all five of their runs in the first inning off Pittsburgh starter and loser Bruce Kison. The game included a home run by Willie Stargell, the 38-year-old spiritual leader of the team. Mike Flanagan² won this first game for the Orioles.



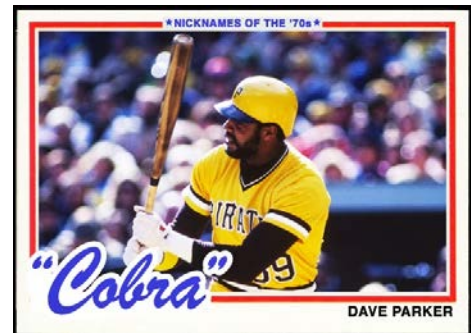
Game 2 was won by Pittsburgh by the score of 3 to 2, with Don Robinson getting the win, Don Stanhouse taking the loss, and Kent Tekulve notching the save. Eddie Murray hit a home run for one of Baltimore's two scores, but would not collect another hit or RBI for the rest of the Series.

Game 3 was won by Baltimore in Pittsburgh by the score of 8 to 4, with Scott McGregor getting the win and John Candelaria taking the loss. The game featured a 67-minute rain delay in the middle of the third inning. After play resumed, the Orioles scored five runs in the fourth, highlighted by a Kiko Garcia bases-loaded triple that chased Candelaria.

Game 4, also in Pittsburgh, was also won by Baltimore, by the score of 9 to 6, even though the Pirates outhit the Birds by the tally of 17 to 12. Tim Stoddard got the win for the Orioles and Kent Tekulve took the loss for the Pirates. Weaver made the strategy decision of sending out the pinch hitter John Lowenstein to bat against Tekulve, and it paid off when Lowenstein slammed a two-run double.

Game 5 in Pittsburgh on October 14 was won by the Pirates by the score of 7 to 1, with Bert Blyleven taking the win for the Pirates and Flanagan taking the loss for the Orioles.

Down one game to three, the Pirates traveled to Baltimore for Game 6 on October 16, where starting pitchers John Candelaria and Jim Palmer battled to a pitchers' duel through six innings. The Cobra, Dave Parker, broke the scoring drought with an RBI single in the seventh inning, followed by a sacrifice fly by Stargell. The Pirates scored two more runs in the top of the eighth to get to their final margin of victory. After the game, Howard Cosell in his limo was surrounded and attacked by angry Oriole fans with shaving cream, prompting the Baltimore police to provide him additional security for Game 7.



WE ARE FAMILY

POPS MVP PERFORMANCE LEADS

PITTSBURGH IN HISTORIC COMEBACK AFTER BEING DOWN 3-1 TO BEAT BALTIMORE IN 7 GAMES AS THE STEEL CITY CELEBRATES

October 17
This Day In Baseball

President Jimmy Carter made an appearance for Game 7 of the 1979 World Series, throwing out the first pitch. The game featured pitcher Grant Jackson for the Pirates (who pitched for the Orioles in their classic 1971 World Series matchup) and Scott McGregor on the hill for the Orioles. Although Baltimore drew first blood in the bottom of the third with a Rich Dauer home run, the Pirates took the lead in the top of the sixth with a towering two-run home run

² May he rest in peace.

by Stargell off Scott McGregor. For the game, Pops went four for five with a single, two doubles, and the home run.

In the top of the ninth, as the Pirates threatened to add to their lead, Earl Weaver made five pitching changes to try to keep the game within reach, but in the end, "We are Family" won the game by the score of 4 to 1, and the Series by the tally of four games to three.

Next issue: Roger Angell comes to Omaha to visit Gibby.

Skipper