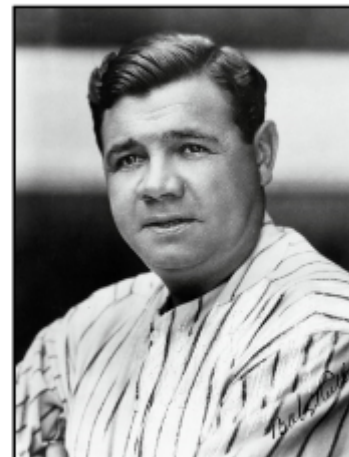




Babe Ruth

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. 21

September 20, 2019

CHIRPERS ON CRUISE CONTROL

With 24 weeks of play in the jar, Jim Ed's **Chirpers** are cruising confidently and in full control of their own destiny, leading the PAC 13 Conference with a 24-week total of 12,423.7 points, a chasmic margin of 325.4 points over the second-place **Senators** and a mastodonic lead of 433.6 points over the third-place **Wahoos**. Even the 1964 Phillies couldn't have blown this big of a lead. Barring a plane crash killing all of his players or a bad bout of Legionnaire's Disease affecting his entire squadron, Tirebiter is soon to be crowned the 2019 Hot Stove League Champion. Not to jinx him or anything.

Here are the standings and point totals through and for Week 24:

STANDINGS THRU WEEK 24 ENDING SEPTEMBER 15, 2019

1.	Redbirds	12423.7	-
2.	Senators	12098.3	325.4
3.	Wahoos	11990.1	433.6
4.	Monarchs	11838.9	584.8
5.	Bums	11707.6	716.1
6.	Skipjacks	11675.8	747.9
7.	Bombers	11249.4	1174.3
8.	Chiefs	11170.0	1253.7
9.	Bears	10863.4	1560.3
10.	Cubs	10756.3	1667.4
11.	Tigers	10585.7	1838.0

12.	Tribe	10381.4	2042.3
13.	Blues	9798.3	2625.4

**POINTS FOR WEEK 24
ENDING SEPTEMBER 15, 2019**

1.	Skipjacks	579.9
2.	Chiefs	562.0
3.	Senators	517.2
4.	Wahoos	481.4
5.	Tribe	466.1
6.	Redbirds	462.9
7.	Bombers	448.1
8.	Tigers	446.4
9.	Bums	408.6
10.	Monarchs	389.0
11.	Cubs	351.6
12.	Bears	335.6
13.	Blues	328.1

The top scoring teams during Week 24 were the **Skipjacks** with 579.9 points and the **Chiefs** with 562.0 points. Impressive performances, but not unlike their owners' track records in the spousal satisfaction department, it's too little, too late.¹ The **Senators** had a respectable 517.2 points for the week to firm up their second-place position, but the **Wahoos** were close behind with 481.4 points. At the other end of the spectrum, the **Blues** (sigh) again trailed the field with 328.1 points, just a smidge better than the **Bears**' total of 335.6 points.

TOP 25 PITCHERS

1.	Justin Verlander	Bums	878.0
2.	Gerrit Cole	Senators	837.0
3.	Shane Bieber	Senators	723.0
4.	Jacob deGrom	Skipjacks	691.0
5.	Stephen Strasburg	Bombers	690.0
6.	Zack Greinke	Chiefs	685.0
7.	Charlie Morton	Redbirds	649.0
8.	Luis Castillo	Monarchs	633.0
9.	Patrick Corbin	Senators	632.0
10.	Lucas Giolito	Tribe	625.0
11.	Walker Buehler	Skipjacks	619.0
12.	Max Scherzer	Wahoos	611.0
13.	Clayton Kershaw	Tigers	604.0
14.	Aaron Nola	Wahoos	603.0
15.	Jack Flaherty	Bears	602.0

¹ Get your minds out of the gutter. I'm talking about loading the dishwasher, helping with the laundry, cleaning up after yourself around the house, telling your bride how much you love her and how much you enjoy talking about "feelings" with her, that kind of stuff.

16.	Hyun-Jin Ryu	Cubs	593.0
17.	Lance Lynn	Bums	586.0
18.	Madison Bumgarner	Bombers	574.0
19.	Mike Minor	Bums	572.0
20.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	568.0
	Sonny Gray	Monarchs	568.0
22.	Eduardo Rodriguez	Skipjacks	558.0
23.	Mike Soroka	Redbirds	546.0
24.	José Berríos	Monarchs	530.0
25.	Noah Syndergaard	Redbirds	498.0

WHO'S HOT -- PITCHERS

1.	Jacob deGrom	Skipjacks	72.0
2.	Mike Foltyniewicz	Chiefs	65.0
3.	Zack Greinke	Chiefs	64.0
4.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	63.0
5.	Zack Wheeler	Bears	59.0
6.	Eduardo Rodriguez	Skipjacks	54.0
7.	Aníbal Sánchez	Skipjacks	53.0
8.	James Paxton	Bombers	52.0
9.	Walker Buehler	Skipjacks	51.0
10.	Merrill Kelly	Tribe	45.0
11.	Madison Bumgarner	Bombers	44.0
12.	Kyle Hendricks	Tigers	43.0
13.	Yu Darvish	Bombers	41.0
	Gerrit Cole	Senators	41.0
15.	Johnny Cueto	Senators	39.0
	Zach Plesac	Chiefs	39.0
17.	Shane Bieber	Senators	38.0
18.	Jordan Lyles	Tribe	35.0
	José Berríos	Monarchs	35.0
20.	Chris Paddack	Wahoos	34.0
21.	Aaron Nola	Wahoos	33.0
	Sean Manaea	Chiefs	33.0
	Adam Wainwright	Redbirds	33.0
	Tyler Beede	Bombers	33.0
25.	Hyun-Jin Ryu	Cubs	32.0

WHO'S NOT -- PITCHERS

1.	Mike Fiers	Senators	-27.0
2.	Steven Brault	Bombers	-23.0
3.	Yusei Kikuchi	Tribe	-15.0
4.	Joey Lucchesi	Bears	-14.0

	José Quintana	Redbirds	-14.0
	Robbie Ray	Bears	-14.0
7.	Max Fried	Skipjacks	-12.0
	Trevor Williams	Monarchs	-12.0
9.	James Marvel	Chiefs	-11.0
	Eric Lauer	Senators	-11.0
	Andrew Heaney	Bears	-11.0
12.	Jakob Junis	Blues	-10.0
13.	Kyle Gibson	Tribe	-8.0
	Mike Minor	Bums	-8.0
15.	Julio Teheran	Bums	-7.0
16.	Chris Bassitt	Cubs	-5.0
	Alex Young	Bombers	-5.0
18.	Reynaldo López	Blues	-4.0
	Brendan McKay	Monarchs	-4.0
20.	Kolby Allard	Bears	-3.0
	Adrian Houser	Wahoos	-3.0
	Josh James	Bums	-3.0
23.	Martín Pérez	Bombers	-2.0
	Clay Buchholz	Cubs	-2.0
	Jacob Waguespack	Blues	-2.0

TOP 25 HITTERS

1.	Alex Bregman	Bears	723.6
2.	Mike Trout	Monarchs	723.0
3.	Cody Bellinger	Bombers	711.3
4.	Anthony Rendon	Cubs	710.4
5.	Freddie Freeman	Monarchs	692.0
6.	Nolan Arenado	Blues	677.6
7.	Mookie Betts	Chiefs	665.8
8.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Redbirds	665.5
9.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	663.4
10.	Juan Soto	Blues	660.0
11.	Ketel Marte	Skipjacks	659.4
12.	Marcus Semien	Redbirds	657.0
13.	Rafael Devers	Blues	645.8
14.	Pete Alonso	Tribe	632.0
15.	Trevor Story	Wahoos	626.5
16.	Carlos Santana	Blues	619.2
17.	Josh Bell	Chiefs	613.6
18.	Josh Donaldson	Monarchs	612.3
19.	J.D. Martinez	Bums	608.9
20.	Eugenio Suárez	Redbirds	604.9
21.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	600.0

22.	DJ LeMahieu	Monarchs	596.6
23.	Eduardo Escobar	Wahoos	592.6
24.	Kris Bryant	Tigers	591.6
25.	Jorge Soler	Senators	587.8

WHO'S HOT -- HITTERS

1.	Kris Bryant	Tigers	63.5
2.	Marcus Semien	Redbirds	54.3
3.	Nico Hoerner	Skipjacks	49.1
4.	Nolan Arenado	Blues	48.6
5.	Eloy Jiménez	Chiefs	48.0
6.	Jason Heyward	Tribe	47.5
7.	Sean Murphy	Wahoos	47.0
8.	Nicholas Castellanos	Wahoos	45.5
9.	Yoán Moncada	Tribe	44.8
10.	Matt Olson	Wahoos	43.7
11.	Kyle Lewis	Monarchs	43.5
12.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	43.2
13.	Luke Voit	Wahoos	42.0
14.	Yasmani Grandal	Bums	41.3
15.	Yordan Alvarez	Bombers	40.5
16.	Khris Davis	Bombers	39.5
17.	Cavan Biggio	Bums	39.2
18.	Austin Meadows	Senators	39.1
19.	Brett Gardner	Tribe	38.5
20.	Eugenio Suárez	Redbirds	37.0
21.	Anthony Rizzo	Bears	36.8
22.	Todd Frazier	Wahoos	36.6
23.	Aaron Judge	Tigers	36.5
24.	Jorge Soler	Senators	36.0
25.	Robinson Chirinos	Tigers	35.8

WHO'S NOT -- HITTERS

1.	Eric Sogard	Tribe	-4.5
2.	Christian Walker	Wahoos	-3.7
3.	Will Smith	Monarchs	-3.5
4.	Anthony Santander	Bears	-2.5
5.	Alex Dickerson	Chiefs	-0.5

SKIP SEZ

- 'Stros teammates Verlander and Cole continue to be the class of the league on the pitching side, at 878.0 and 837.0 points, respectively. In the hitting department, the

Bears' Alex Bregman has supplanted the injured Mike Trout and is now the leading hitter with 723.6 points. Bellinger is close behind at 711.3 points, and the white-hot Anthony Rendon now has 710.4 points. Noteworthy that Jorge Soler of the **Senators** is now at No. 25 on the list with 587.8 points.

- Itchie had 4 pitchers in the Top 10 of the "Who's Hot" list for the week, with Jacob deGrom (72.0), Eduardo Rodríguez (54.0), Aníbal Sánchez (53.0), and Walker Buehler (51.0). The **Chiefs** also had 4 players make the list, with Mike Foltyniewicz, Zack Greinke, Zach Plesac, and Sean Manaea showing their stuff. But like I said, too little, too late.
- On the "Hot Hitters" list, the **Wahoos** had 5 players (Sean Murphy, Nicholas Castellanos, Matt Olson, Luke Voit and Todd Frazier), but still only managed to have the 4th highest team total for the week. When will Edson learn that pitching is everything in this league.
- On the "Who's Not -- Pitchers" list, my Opening Day starting pitcher Mike Fiers decided to self-immolate and wound up walking the **Senators** team back by a total of 27.0 points. Ouch. That wasn't the kind of "fier" I was hoping for with this guy. Adding insult to injury, Eric Lauer of the **Senators** hop-scotched my team back to the tune of 11.0 points, and between the two of them, they all but eliminated any faint hopes that the **Senators** had for a championship run. I can't rule out the employment of "voodoo doll" tactics by one or more jealous league members. You know who you are.

ROAD TRIP DESTINATION: MEMPHIS

This Tuesday past, Itchie and I hit the road for Memphis, Tennessee, to see the AAA Championship baseball game between the International League Champion Columbus Clippers and the Pacific League titleist Sacramento River Cats at beautiful AutoZone Park. A couple of pictures here will help tell the story:









For those of you keeping score at home, the River Cats claimed the title with a 4 to nil win over the Clippers, pushing across 3 runs in the first inning and adding another one for good measure in the sixth. The winning pitcher was Caleb Baragar of the River Cats with Kyle Dowdy taking the loss for the Clippers.

One of the highlights of the game was getting free tickets from a nice fella who saw us standing in line and evidently thought we were down on our luck--perhaps he saw Itchie panhandling before the game, and this spurred his act of charity. One of the lowlights was sitting directly in front of two of the stinkiest millennials of all-time, a young, obnoxious couple who quite clearly had not run their sweatpants through the laundry for quite some time. Yes, I guess we were judging them.

After the game, Itchie hailed a rickshaw (I have found that Bender has a very odd predisposition toward them) for a lift down to Beale Street, where we enjoyed blues and barbecue at (the late) B.B. King's restaurant, where some young Lebanese woman took a shine to Itchie.



Following that, we went to another bar on Beale Street for more live music, and a one-man dancing show put on by some young dude who clearly had been overserved and was high as a kite on something. I know what you're thinking, but no, it wasn't Itchie that I'm talking about. But it could have been. After leaving that spot, we were accosted by a very creative panhandler who shoed off some competition to protect his right to wheedle a few clams out of a pair of unsuspecting rubes from Nebraska.

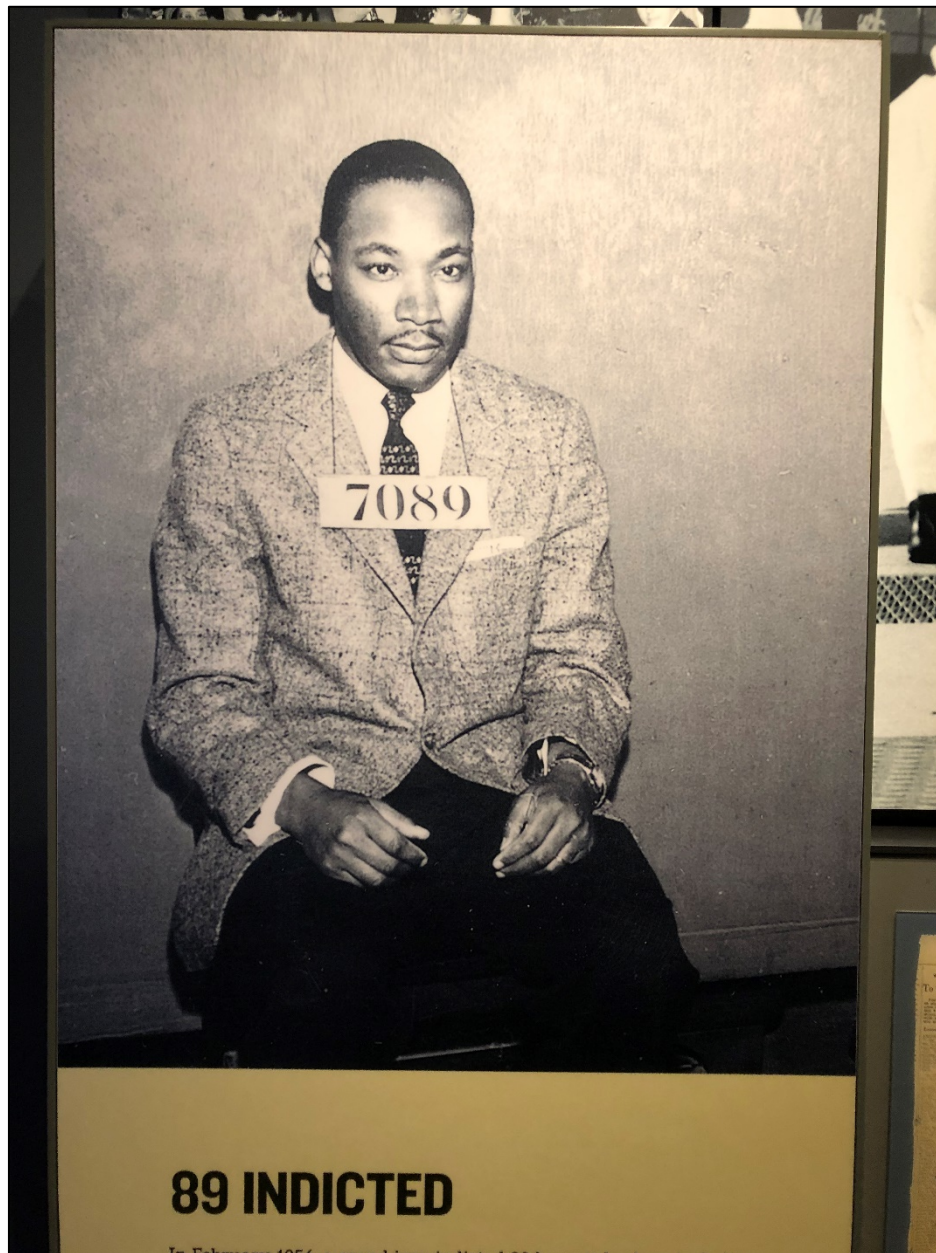
Our Beale Street adventure now concluded, my running mate efficiently hailed another rickshaw. This one was piloted by an elderly gentleman with, it turns out, congestive heart failure, as we learned roughly two blocks into our ride when we had to hop out and help our new friend (the self-titled "Boxer") push his craft up a slight incline. In between gasps for air and clutching his chest (think Redd Foxx here, uttering, "Elizabeth, I'm comin' to join you"), Boxer regaled us with tales of his entrepreneurship as we made our way--ever so slowly--toward our hotel. Turns out that Boxer owns three different businesses, including a barbecue restaurant,

and only pedals the rickshaw to stay in shape. Unfortunately, Boxer spent a little too much time entertaining us and not quite enough time watching the road ahead, and soon he got one of his rickshaw tires stuck in a rut along the light rail system track, and we had to disembark once again. The three of us yanked and tugged and pulled on Boxer's taxi until we finally pulled it free of the rut. Boxer not only thanked us profusely for our aid and assistance, but he gave us each a sweaty hug at the conclusion of our ride (after we tipped him handsomely), and then asked us to join hands with him as he led us through a prayer. I'm not making this up. Truly a blessed event.

The following day, it was my plan for Itchie and I to tour Graceland, but my Social Justice Warrior friend insisted that we instead pay a visit to the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel, where Martin Luther King Jr. was shot and killed in April of 1968 while supporting a strike by sanitation workers.







It was well worth the visit, as this place is an incredible monument to King and a stirring tribute to the long and hard fight for equality for persons of color in this country, from the arrest of Rosa Parks to the Montgomery bus boycotts to the lunch counter protests in Greensboro and multiple other Southern cities to the Freedom Riders to the March on Selma, and everything in between. The Museum is a stark and unvarnished reminder about just how horribly African Americans have been treated in this country, and Itchie and I are in full agreement that it is no small wonder that there are a lot of pissed-off African Americans in this nation.

So there you have it. Memorable, to say the least.

On our drive back from Memphis, we got off course a little bit and ended up driving through a little drip of a town known as Black Oak, Arkansas, which, according to the internet, was the

home of all of the initial band members in the Southern rock band of that name, who got their start by stealing amplifiers and other sound equipment from their own high school. Another highlight of the drive home was finding ourselves on Preacher Roe Boulevard, named after Arkansas native Elwin Charles "Preacher" Roe, a pitcher for the Cardinals, Pirates and Dodgers who once (1951) went 22 and 3 while wearing Dodger Blue. Roe was still pitching at age 39 in 1954--unusual at that time--and when asked to explain his career longevity, he exclaimed, "Clean livin' and the spitball." Love it.

Unfortunately, I couldn't get Itchie interested in listening to either of the books on tape that I had purchased for the trip, knowing full well that spending ten full hours of time in the same vehicle with him would be challenging. Instead, I got to listen to him drone on and on about his athletic prowess as a youth, his many conquests of beautiful women over the span of his life, his golf handicap, his beautiful grandchildren, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I know, right? Don't let me make that mistake again.

All kidding aside, it was a really fun two-day junket to Memphis and back with a truly good and amusing fellow.

* * * * *

Okay, time to wrap up this one and send it off to the presses. I leave you now with a wonderful black and white photo from a new book I just purchased: *The Story of Baseball in 100 Photographs*.



What a Gas

NEXT WEEK: *The Baseball Fan's Bucket List--162 Things You Must See, Do, Get and Experience Before You Die.*

Good luck to all of you in the final week of the season.

Skipper