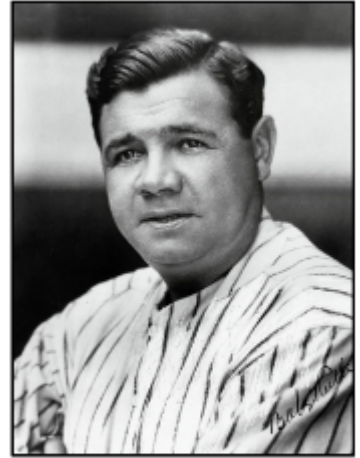




Babe Ruth

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. 22

September 24, 2019

REDBIRDS ON CUSP OF CROWN BUT WHERE'S JIMMY?

Brethren:

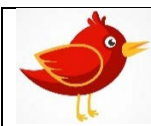
With only a week (actually, six days) left in the 2019 HSL Campaign, Tirebiter's **Beloved Boids** have all but locked up their first-ever Hot Stove League crown, maintaining a 274.2-point lead over the second place **Senators** through games of Sunday, September 22. This in spite of the **Senators** again posting the highest point total during Week 25 with 533.7 points.

His first HSL Championship all but locked up, the question extant is:




Where's Jimmy?

Nobody in the Pansing Hogan Ernst & Bachman law firm has seen hide nor hair of Buser since last week, and stern questioning of his partners, associates, paralegals, secretaries, law clerks, runners, his personal valet and even his taxidermist have yielded nary a clue.

Rumors abound concerning the current whereabouts of JimEd, and include the following miasma of speculation:



Holed up in his bed at home, the Hawkeye Channel on TV, sheets pulled up to his upper lip, an IV drip infusing a constant stream of Jack Daniels into his bloodstream, telephones on vibration mode, and Patty nervously bringing him moment-by-moment

	updates on baseball games and the current status of the HSL standings;
	Holed up in a duck blind in Bumfuck, Missouri, Hawkeye Channel on his mobile device, cell phone on vibration mode, an IV drip infusing a constant stream of Jack Daniels into his bloodstream, and one of his sons nervously feeding him moment-by-moment updates on baseball games and the current status of the HSL standings;
	Holed up at the <i>Spearmint Rhino</i> in Carter Lake, Hawkeye Channel on the TV, cell phone on vibration mode, an IV drip infusing a constant stream of Jack Daniels into his bloodstream, with a cadre of handsomely-tipped strippers nervously feeding him moment-by-moment updates on baseball games and the current status of the HSL standings;
	Holed up in Bin Laden's lair in the remote reaches of the mountains in Afghanistan, Hawkeye Channel, a felony to have on in said country, cell phone on vibration mode, an IV drip infusing a constant stream of Jack Daniels into his bloodstream, with members of the Taliban nervously feeding him moment-by-moment updates on baseball games and the current status of the HSL standings; and JimEd wearing a vest packed with 23 megatons of dynamite, finger on the trigger, prepared to end it all by exploding himself if another team catches and surpasses the Redbirds and relegates his Beloved Boids to yet another second place finish.

So wherever you are out there, JimEd, if you have access to email and you read this, please let us know where we should all call, email, text or by messenger pigeon contact you on Sunday to congratulate you for your first-ever Hot Stove League title. Well played, Mauer.

**STANDINGS THRU WEEK 25
ENDING SEPTEMBER 22, 2019**

1	Redbirds	12906.2	-
2	Senators	12632.0	274.2
3	Wahoos	12418.1	488.1
4	Monarchs	12266.2	640.0
5	Bums	12145.9	760.3
6	Skipjacks	12115.8	790.4
7	Bombers	11748.5	1157.7
8	Chiefs	11550.9	1355.3
9	Bears	11292.3	1613.9
10	Cubs	11091.4	1814.8
11	Tigers	10934.8	1971.4
12	Tribe	10749.3	2156.9

13	Blues	10163.6	2742.6
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**POINTS FOR WEEK 25
ENDING SEPTEMBER 22, 2019**

1	Senators	533.7
2	Bombers	499.1
3	Redbirds	482.5
4	Skipjacks	440.0
5	Bums	438.3
6	Bears	428.9
7	Wahoos	428.0
8	Monarchs	427.3
9	Chiefs	380.9
10	Tribe	367.9
11	Blues	365.3
12	Tigers	349.1
13	Cubs	335.1

TOP 25 PITCHERS

1.	Justin Verlander	Bums	927.0
2.	Gerrit Cole	Senators	873.0
3.	Shane Bieber	Senators	754.0
4.	Jacob deGrom	Skipjacks	730.0
	Stephen Strasburg	Bombers	730.0
6.	Zack Greinke	Chiefs	697.0
7.	Charlie Morton	Redbirds	673.0
8.	Patrick Corbin	Senators	663.0
9.	Luis Castillo	Monarchs	652.0
10.	Jack Flaherty	Bears	635.0
11.	Walker Buehler	Skipjacks	624.0
12.	Hyun-Jin Ryu	Cubs	623.0
	Max Scherzer	Wahoos	623.0
14.	Lance Lynn	Bums	621.0
15.	Clayton Kershaw	Tigers	618.0
16.	Sonny Gray	Monarchs	599.0
	Aaron Nola	Wahoos	599.0
18.	Eduardo Rodriguez	Skipjacks	594.0
19.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	579.0
20.	Madison Bumgarner	Bombers	573.0
21.	José Berríos	Monarchs	568.0
22.	Mike Minor	Bums	566.0
23.	Mike Soroka	Redbirds	565.0
24.	Yu Darvish	Bombers	529.0
25.	Mike Fiers	Senators	523.0

WHO'S HOT -- PITCHERS

1.	Marco Gonzales	Wahoos	51.0
2.	Justin Verlander	Bums	49.0
3.	Yu Darvish	Bombars	44.0
	Marcus Stroman	Senators	44.0
5.	Luis Severino	Redbirds	43.0
6.	Mike Foltynewicz	Chiefs	40.0
	Mike Fiers	Senators	40.0
	Stephen Strasburg	Bombars	40.0
9.	Jacob deGrom	Skipjacks	39.0
	Logan Webb	Chiefs	39.0
11.	Merrill Kelly	Tribe	38.0
	Adam Plutko	Blues	38.0
	José Berríos	Monarchs	38.0
	Robbie Ray	Bears	38.0
15.	Dinelson Lamet	Chiefs	37.0
16.	Eduardo Rodriguez	Skipjacks	36.0
	Gerrit Cole	Senators	36.0
18.	Lance Lynn	Bums	35.0
	Homer Bailey	Blues	35.0
20.	James Paxton	Bombars	34.0
	Masahiro Tanaka	Tigers	34.0
22.	Zach Davies	Senators	33.0
	Jack Flaherty	Bears	33.0
24.	Miles Mikolas	Bums	32.0
25.	Shane Bieber	Senators	31.0

WHO'S NOT -- PITCHERS

1.	Jaime Barria	Chiefs	-13.0
2.	Reynaldo López	Blues	-12.0
	Drew Smyly	Chiefs	-12.0
4.	Ryan Yarbrough	Tigers	-11.0
5.	Steven Matz	Tribe	-8.0
6.	Clay Buchholz	Cubs	-7.0
7.	Mike Minor	Bums	-6.0
8.	Martín Pérez	Bombars	-4.0
	Kyle Gibson	Tribe	-4.0
	Félix Hernández	Cubs	-4.0
	Aaron Nola	Wahoos	-4.0
12.	Jorge López	Cubs	-2.0
13.	Tanner Roark	Tigers	-1.0
	Glenn Sparkman	Chiefs	-1.0
	Mike Montgomery	Monarchs	-1.0
	Madison Bumgarner	Bombars	-1.0
	José Quintana	Redbirds	-1.0

TOP 25 HITTERS

1.	Alex Bregman	Bears	750.9
2.	Cody Bellinger	Bombers	739.9
3.	Anthony Rendon	Cubs	723.6
4.	Freddie Freeman	Monarchs	703.6
5.	Marcus Semien	Redbirds	701.6
6.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Redbirds	701.0
7.	Nolan Arenado	Blues	697.0
8.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	686.6
9.	Juan Soto	Blues	673.5
10.	Pete Alonso	Tribe	673.1
11.	Rafael Devers	Blues	670.2
12.	Mookie Betts	Chiefs	666.9
13.	Carlos Santana	Blues	652.5
14.	Trevor Story	Wahoos	652.0
15.	DJ LeMahieu	Monarchs	628.4
16.	Eugenio Suárez	Redbirds	625.1
17.	Jorge Soler	Senators	622.3
18.	Eduardo Escobar	Wahoos	618.3
19.	J.D. Martinez	Bums	616.4
20.	Josh Bell	Chiefs	613.6
21.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	612.4
22.	Josh Donaldson	Monarchs	610.9
23.	Anthony Rizzo	Bears	605.3
24.	Bryce Harper	Senators	601.2
25.	Charlie Blackmon	Skipjacks	599.9

WHO'S HOT -- HITTERS

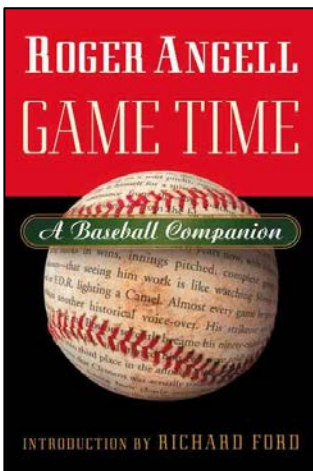
1.	Nelson Cruz	Cubs	51.0
2.	Miguel Sanó	Bums	50.2
3.	Trey Mancini	Bombers	48.0
4.	Eloy Jiménez	Chiefs	47.5
5.	Cavan Biggio	Bums	44.9
6.	Marcus Semien	Redbirds	44.6
	Shed Long	Monarchs	44.6
8.	Corey Seager	Chiefs	42.4
9.	Tommy Edman	Bombers	42.2
10.	Pete Alonso	Tribe	41.1
11.	Mark Canha	Wahoos	41.0
	Oscar Mercado	Redbirds	41.0
13.	Austin Dean	Bears	39.7
14.	Yoán Moncada	Tribe	39.3
15.	Starlin Castro	Tigers	38.1
16.	Kyle Schwarber	Bears	37.5
17.	Jeff McNeil	Chiefs	35.6

18.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Redbirds	35.5
19.	Yasiel Puig	Bombers	35.0
20.	Jorge Soler	Senators	34.5
21.	Garrett Hampson	Bears	34.3
22.	Aaron Judge	Tigers	34.0
23.	Carlos Santana	Blues	33.3
24.	Austin Hays	Cubs	32.0
	Trent Grisham	Chiefs	32.0

WHO'S NOT -- HITTERS

1.	Wil Myers	Redbirds	-7.5
2.	Daniel Murphy	Tigers	-3.5
3.	Rougned Odor	Redbirds	-3.2
4.	Dansby Swanson	Bombers	-2.7
5.	Nick Markakis	Senators	-2.5
	Domingo Santana	Blues	-2.5
7.	Josh Donaldson	Monarchs	-1.4
8.	Dee Gordon	Tigers	-0.8
9.	Alex Dickerson	Chiefs	-0.5
	Daniel Vogelbach	Chiefs	-0.5

**BOOK REPORT:
GAME TIME
A Baseball Companion
 By Roger Angell**



As I near the end of Roger Angell's classic *Game Time* and as we near the end of the season, please allow me to share with you a few more clips of this wonderful collection of his best baseball prose:

Roger Angell absolutely loves spring training, and has written prolifically about the many games he has watched in the casual atmospheres of both Grapefruit League and Cactus League. Here are a few beautiful pearls from this collection:

The old people all around me hunched forward, their necks bent, peering out at the field from under their cap bills, and I had the curious impression that I was in a giant aviary. Out in right field foul ground, members of the Sox' big pitching squad began wind sprints. They stood together in clusters, their uniforms a vivid white in the blaze of late sun, and four or five at a time would break away from the group and make a sudden sandpiper dash¹ along the foot of the distant sea-green wall, all the way into deep center field, where they stopped just as quickly

¹ Could you come up with a more perfect description of ballplayers suddenly taking off for a sprint in the outfield, before or after a spring training game? Classic.

and stood and stared at the game. At last, in the bottom of the twelfth, the White Sox loaded the bases on some sloppy Dodger fielding, and Nellie Fox, his wad of tobacco bulging, delivered the single that broke the bird spell and sent everyone home to supper. "*There now,*" said the woman in front of me, standing up and brushing her skirt. "Wasn't that nice?"

* * *

There were perhaps two dozen of us in the stands, and what kept us there, what nailed us to our seats for a sweet, boring hour or more, was not just the *whop!* of bats, the climbing white arcs of outfield flies, and the swift flight of the ball whipped around the infield, but something more painful and just as obvious--the knowledge that we had never made it. We would never know the rich joke that doubled over three young pitchers in front of the dugout; we would never be part of that golden company on the field, which each of us, certainly for one moment of his life, had wanted more than anything else in the world to join.²

* * *

Weis led off the bottom of the eighth, and popped up to left. He started still another double play in the ninth, but his afternoon was ruined. The Cardinals won the game, 2-0. That evening, I looked up Al Weis' record. He is 22 years old and was an all-scholastic player at Farmingdale High, on Long Island. In his three years in organized baseball, he has played with Holdrege, in the Nebraska State League; with Lincoln, in the Three I League; and with Charleston, in the Sally League. His batting averages in those three years--.275, .231, .261--tell the story: good field, no hit. Time has run out for him this spring, and it must seem to him that it went too quickly. Next week, he will report to the White Sox farm camp in Hollywood, Florida, for another year in the minors.

* * *

On Don Zimmer (as a player, for the 1962 Mets)

Neil and Don Zimmer looked unchanged--Neil intense, withdrawn, talented, too tightly wound for an ideal infielder, and Zimmer, eager and competitive, angrily trying to make pugnacity compensate for what he lacks in size, skill and lack.

* * *

² I take it as gospel that all thirteen of us have entertained these same thoughts of envy of professional ballplayers and their lives.

Finally, there is Casey himself, a walking pantheon of evocations. His pinstripes are light blue now, and so is the turtleneck sweat-shirt protruding above his shirt, but the short pants, the hobble, the muttering lips, and the comic, jerky gestures are unaltered, and today he proved himself still capable of the winning move.

* * *

Whitey Ford and Warren Spahn

The incident that startled me at Bradenton was one of those juxtapositions that are possible only in spring training. In the seventh inning, with the sun now fully out and the grass turning soft and emerald as it dried, Whitey Ford came in to pitch for the Yankees. At the same moment, in the Braves bullpen in deep left field, Warren Spahn began throwing--not warming up but simply loosening his arm. Suddenly I saw that from my seat behind first base the two pitchers--the two best lefthanders in baseball, the two best left- *or* right-handers--were in a direct line with each other, Ford exactly superimposed on Spahn. It was a trick photograph, a *trompe-l'oeil*: a hundred-and-fifty-eight-game winner and a three-hundred-and-nine-game winner throwing baseballs in the same fragment of space. Ford, with his short, businesslike windup, was all shoulders and quickness, while behind him, Spahn would slowly kick his right leg up high and to the left, peering over his shoulder as he leaned back, and then deliver the ball with an easy, explosive sweep. It excited me to a ridiculous extent. I couldn't get over it. I looked about me for someone to point it out to, but I couldn't find a recognizable fan-face near me.³

* * *

On a Dave Kingman blast off Catfish Hunter

Nothing, however, could touch or diminish Kingman's first shot. Catfish Hunter, after his stint, sat in the training room with his shoulder encased in an ice bag and his elbow in a bucket of ice water, and reminisced cheerfully about other epochal downtowners he had given up. There had been a preseason one by Willie McCovey and perhaps, years ago, a Mickey Mantle five-hundred-footer. Mantle, now a Yankee springtime coach, could not remember it. "I know I never saw one longer than this," he said. Bill Verdon guessed that the ball had flown an additional 250 feet beyond the fence, into an adjacent diamond, which might qualify it as a simultaneous homer and double: a six-base ball. The Yankees were still talking about the home run the next day, when Hunter told Ron Blomberg he hoped he hadn't hurt his neck out

³ I love the part about "It excited me to a ridiculous extent." Just how I feel when I read Angell's poetry.

there in left field watching the ball depart. Others took it up, rookies and writers and regulars, redescrining and amplifying it, already making it a legend, and it occurred to me that the real effect of the blast, except for the memory and joy of it, might be to speed Catfish's Hunter's acceptance by his new teammates. There's nothing like a little public humiliation to make a three-and-a-half-million-dollar executive lovable.

* * *

*On Why Angell Makes so Many Notes During
Spring Training*

Guilt, as I have said, is the spur, for it is my secret Calvinist fear that baseball will run dry on me someday and I will find nothing fresh at the morning camps, despite my notes and numberings, or go newsless on some sun-filled afternoon, and so at last lose this sweet franchise.

* * *

On Rusty Staub's September 1984 Heroics

He rapped out nineteen more pinch hits over his last two seasons--each under extreme duress, for the Mets had risen into serious contention in their division by then. To me, his finest moments came in late September 1984. I was at Shea Stadium when he smote an eighth-inning two-run pinch-hit single that beat the Phillies and clinched second place for the Mets. He came out of the dugout for a standing O (a practice he deplores), waved his cap, and disappeared--done for the year, I assumed. *Almost done.* The next night (I was away, worse luck), with the Mets again in the soup, manager Davey Johnson again rang for the specialist, and Staub whacked a game-winning two-run homer in the bottom of the ninth. It was Rusty's only home run of the year (and his two-hundred-and-ninety-first lifetime) and the first for him since he turned forty, back in April. He struck his very first home run back on June 3, 1963--Don Drysdale was pitching--when he was a nineteen-year-old first baseman with the Houston Colt Forty-Fives. Rusty Staub thus qualifies as the second player ever to hit major-league homers as a teenager and in his forties; his companion in this feat is Ty Cobb. Stat of the year.

* * *

On Will Clark

A year ago in Scottsdale, Clark (if the Dalai Lama is reading this, Will Clark is the Giants' all star first baseman and nonpareil left-handed swinger) had been lining a lot of pitches foul into right

field, and late one afternoon Brenly and I, from behind the batting cage, watched him repeatedly hitting outside pitches toward left field and then a bit toward center: working his way back around, in the parlance. This year, standing behind the same cage one morning, I noticed that Clark was doing exactly the opposite. The B.P. pitcher was throwing inside, on Will's instruction, and he was doggedly trying to inside-out the ball: keep his bat level and hit the pitch off his fists into left field. He kept talking to himself and gesturing to the pitcher to keep the ball in tight. He wasn't doing well at first, and finally he lost patience. "*Don't come off the ball like that, Will Nuschler Clark!*" he growled, stepping back. "*Stay in there!*" He made some rumbling noises and set his jaw, his mouth looks like an upside-down jack-o-lantern's⁴ when he's up to bat--and yelled to the pitcher, "I'm going to inside you if it takes all fucking *day!*" The next pitch was on his hands again, but he inside-outed it like a mirror-image Roberto Clemente, and the ball flew hard down the left-field line and bounded on the white foul line. Clark said, "There. *Whatcha think now?*" He was staring at me but clearly still talking to Will Nuschler Clark. I looked around to see if anyone else had seen all of this, perhaps even some young Giants, but no one seemed to be paying attention.

* * *

On fear of failure

Fear of change and fear of failure are commonplace in any profession, one may suppose, but sports punish failure so swiftly and with such grisly results that the specter of debacle attends every game, waiting ghoulishly to climb up on this or that player's back and hitch a ride.

* * *

On his buddy Tom Trebelhorn

He's the kind of man who makes you glad you didn't take up astronomy or the cello as a sideline.

All right, that's it for this issue. Mind you, I could go on and on with other great excerpts from *Game Time*, but it's time to bring this one to a close. Thanks for listening.

NEXT ISSUE: 162 Baseball Things You Must See, Do, Get and Experience Before You Die.⁵

Skipper

⁴ Can't you just see this? What a description.

⁵ Maybe.