



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

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HOW JIM ED WON IT ALL

As real world baseball clanks along toward the eventual World Series, let's revisit our fantasy world of baseball and take a look at how Tirebiter won his first Hot Stove League title in the 2019 Campaign, in his 27th year of competing with our Band of Brothers.

THE DRAFT

The first question to be explored is: Did Jim win this year because he picked the best team on Draft Day? He certainly got himself off to a great start by taking Christian Yelich in the 1st, followed by Ronald Acuña Jr. in the 2nd, and as the numbers below will show, the **Red-birds'** manager picked a team *par excellence* in the first 10 rounds of the Draft. But after that, not so much. Take a look:

[Note: **Green highlighting** indicates highest number for the rounds; **red highlighting** represents lowest number for the rounds.]

OOF	Team	1-5	6-10	1-10	11-15	1-15	16-20	1-20	21-25	1-25	26-30	1-30	Actual Total
1	Redbirds	3160.5	2540.7	5701.2	1338.8	7040.0	1965.6	9005.6	898.2	9903.8	1336.8	11,240.6	13,213.0
2	Senators	3216.5	2248.7	5465.2	2290.4	7755.6	1741.3	9496.9	1681.3	11,178.2	1461.1	12,639.3	13,085.9
3	Wahoos	2910.0	1567.6	4477.6	2506.1	6983.7	2250.0	9233.7	1443.3	10,677.0	1382.6	12,059.6	12,857.5
4	Monarchs	3057.7	2455.5	5513.2	2169.4	7682.6	1420.6	9103.2	1052.2	10,155.4	1266.3	11,421.7	12,683.6
5	Bums	3373.8	1768.4	5142.2	2161.7	7303.9	1582.3	8886.2	1310.0	10,196.2	1202.4	11,398.6	12,630.9
6	Skipjacks	3128.0	2504.8	5632.8	1721.9	7354.7	1535.4	8890.1	1535.4	10,425.5	1236.7	11,662.2	12,610.5
7	Bombers	2424.0	2379.4	4803.4	2122.2	6915.6	1687.2	8602.8	1054.3	9657.1	573.8	10,230.9	12,152.2
8	Chiefs	2411.9	1585.0	3996.9	1925.5	5922.4	1324.1	7246.5	1763.6	9010.1	1412.0	10,422.1	11,990.5
9	Bears	2993.6	1898.7	4892.3	1393.0	6285.3	1514.5	7799.8	777.3	8577.1	318.0	8895.1	11,757.7
10	Cubs	2760.5	1411.6	4172.1	1945.7	6117.8	1002.5	7120.3	1076.2	8196.5	1063.9	9260.4	11,564.2
11	Tigers	2049.8	2722.6	4772.4	1764.0	6536.4	1449.4	7985.8	1390.1	9375.9	1219.2	10,595.1	11,268.9
12	Tribe	2427.3	1681.4	4108.7	2033.3	6142.0	1366.9	7508.9	919.1	8428.0	882.0	9310.0	10,977.3
13	Blues	2014.4	2438.0	4452.4	1664.1	6116.5	1415.8	7532.3	1481.9	9014.2	954.4	9966.6	10,468.7

Skipper's keen analysis of these numbers has concluded that Jimmy did not pick the best overall team on Draft Day, but picked a very solid team, and then managed the heck out of it during the season. While acknowledging what Mark Twain had to say about statistics, and understanding that the numbers above are merely "gross" numbers, and that gross numbers alone do not a team make, the numbers are the numbers, and they do not lie. Read on.

Disclaimer: These numbers were calculated by me, by hand, at night, usually in the cups while watching a playoff game, and have not yet been audited, so there very well could be a few math errors. I think mostly they are accurate.

As solid as Jim Ed's first five rounds of the Draft were (Yelich, Acuña, Syndergaard, Suárez and Torres), the gross total numbers for those first five round players was only third best in the league, behind the **Bums'** 3373.8 and the **Senators'** 3216.5. The **Bums'** first five selectees (J.D. Martinez, Verlander, Bauer, Merrifield and Chapman) turned out to be the top starting quintet. Not far behind were the **Senators'** top five (Harper, Cole, Bogaerts, Corbin and Haniger), and if Haniger hadn't almost denutted himself and missed more than half the season, the Skipper *would* have had the Top Five total and undoubtedly would have won the whole enchilada. Just saying.

The **Blues**, unsurprisingly, had the worst start to the Draft, with solid selections Arenado (709.7) and Soto (689.0), followed by flat tires Carrasco (191.0), Carpenter (336.7) and Taillon (88.0 -- ugh). Better luck next season, Sunny. And give some thought to actually preparing ahead of time.

In the next five rounds, Rounds 6-10, the **Redbirds** really began to take wing, with selections Realmuto, Pham, Tanaka, Morton (709) and Iglesias, for the second-highest league total (the lowly **Tigers** actually had the most points in those five rounds) in the league with 2540.7 for the 6-10 rounds. Along with the first five picks, then, Jim Ed led the entire league in terms of gross points from his first ten selections with 5701.2 points, paving the way for the **Birds'** championship season. At the same time, the undertaker for the **Chiefs** was digging his own grave, with a poor first five rounds of the Draft (2411.9 gross points) followed by a substandard second five rounds (1585.0), resulting in the lowest number of gross points for the first ten selections of the Draft (3996.9). There's no coming back from that, as B.T. proved with his overall 8th place finish, his lowest in many moons.

The usually-competitive **Wahoos** got off to an absolutely abysmal start in the 2019 Draft, with his first ten selections having a gross total of only 4477.6 points, which was only the eighth best total in the league through ten rounds. Apparently at that time he started rubbernecking over onto Magpie's cheat sheet, and his luck changed almost immediately, as his five picks during Rounds 11-15 (Porcello, Choo, Escobar, Pederson and Hader) had the most gross points for these five rounds. Similarly, PAwesome had the most gross points for the five rounds of 16-20, pulling the fat out of the fire and giving his team a fighting chance to be competitive.

The ho-hum **Monarchs** did not have the best or the worst most point totals for any of the six five-round groupings of players. Same with the **Skipjacks**, **Bombers** and **Tribe**.

On the other hand, the **Bears** were plugging along at a decent pace until SloPay suffered a stroke right around the 21st round, and spit the bit for the duration of the Draft, in the end resulting in having a team with the lowest gross points through 30 rounds, and well behind the next-lowest gross point totals team, the **Cubs**. It took a whole lot of fighting and clawing to bring the **Bears** all the way up to 9th place by the end of the season. Well played, SloPay. Kinda.

Not to toot my own horn about the Draft, but the **Senators**, in retrospect, had the most consistent Draft from top to bottom, and ended up with the highest gross point total across all 30 rounds of 12,639.3 points, a sizeable margin over the second-place **Wahoos** with 12,059.6 and a whole bunch more ahead of the eventual champion **Redbirds**. The only thing that one can say is that there must have been some subpar management of the **Senators** team throughout the season, but I'm not pointing fingers, and I'm not naming names.

It might also be pointed out that although I proposed multiple (like, about 8 or 10) trades with other managers throughout the course of the season, not a single response was received, so I didn't have the same benefit that Jim Ed had of other managers being willing to help him rebuild his roster to win his first championship. For example, on July 8, there was a trade between the **Redbirds** and the **Chiefs** in which Jimmy picked up ace starter Luis Severino for third baseman Kyle Seager. Curiously enough, within just a few days, the **Chiefs** sent newly-acquired Kyle Seager to the waivers, cutting him loose from his squad. Curiously enough, this recent **Chiefs** trade acquisition and then castoff was subsequently picked up

by--wait for it--the **Redbirds**, apparently while our Commissioner was asleep at the wheel. Or was he? During this same general frame, we can see that our supposedly straight-as-an-arrow Commissioner was himself engaging in some monkeyshines and tomfoolery, trading his star first baseman, Jose Abreu, to the **Redbirds** in exchange for Masahiro Tanaka.

Not that I believe in conspiracies, but does this whole series of transactions not reek like unrefrigerated mackerel? You be the judge.

Okay, okay, I'm kidding. But I do fail to understand why other managers were so glad to trade with the owner of the first-place **Redbirds**, while collusively--I mean, collectively--refusing to respond to any **Senatorial** proffers of trades.

In the end, I think that Jimmy won this thing because he picked a rock-solid team on Draft Day, including perhaps the top pick of the whole Draft, Marcus Semien in the 20th round (720.1 points) and then picked up free agent Mike Soroka (574 points) in April and rode these two stallions (along with the others) to the title. A fantastic job of managing, Jimmy.

MEMORIES OF CALIFORNIA

But enough about the 2019 HSL Draft, at least for this issue of *From the Bullpen*. Please indulge me to venture off into a different direction, our recent trip to California.



On October 8, my better half and I flew to San Diego and then drove down to Chula Vista, the city of my birth, to see Van Morrison in concert at the North Island Credit Union Amphitheatre. I know, catchy name. Anyway, although Van is now 74 years of age, he was still in fine fiddle for the concert, and it was a great show. Average age of the attendees, probably my age or older. Anyway, if you've never seen Van Morrison in concert, and you have a chance, take it. He has an incredible body of work, and one heck of a good group of musicians playing around him.

For our lodging on this part of the trip, we stayed at a hotel right on the ocean at Imperial Beach, a tiny little town just south of San Diego where my parents lived back in 1956 when I was born, and where my dad was a principal in the Sweetwater School District.



And because my dad was a packrat--the apple didn't fall far from the tree on this one--I have all of his old teacher contracts, which listed, among other things, his home address. Because of this, I know that my folks lived in a little duplex at 939 Florida Street in Imperial Beach when I was born, and then later moved to 230 Elder Street, just two blocks from our hotel in Imperial Beach, and so on this junket, I stopped by to take another look at them, as I have done on past trips. Here are pictures of the two houses:



939 Florida Street, Imperial Beach, CA



230 Elder Street, Imperial Beach, CA

Hard to believe that Jack and Phyllis and sister Kathi and I all lived together in these tiny little residences, but I am sure that my folks thought they were in hog heaven, with the warm weather and all, and living two blocks from the beach.

As the story goes, my folks got homesick for the Midwest, and packed up and moved the family from Imperial Beach to Beatrice, Nebraska, in 1957, and then to Lincoln in 1960. What,

they couldn't have sucked it up for a few years so that I could have grown up as a surfer dude? So rude.

But a fun trip down memory lane, even though I obviously have no memory of those years.

SQUAW VALLEY



From Imperial Beach, we flew to Reno, Nevada, and then drove to Squaw Valley for a leadership conference for the American College of Trial Lawyers. This is where the 1960 Winter Olympics were held, and it is truly one of the most beautiful places on the planet. I had previously been to Lake Tahoe back in 2006 on a family vacation, and even though Squaw Valley is only about 30 minutes away we did not make it up to Squaw Valley on the earlier trip so this was all new territory for me.

All of the aspens were in full fall regalia on this trip, and the area is also blessed with an abundance of maple trees, which were all shades of red, orange and yellow. Here are a couple of pictures from the Resort at Squaw Valley, which do not do the area justice, but at least give you somewhat of an idea of the beauty of the area.

To be continued.











FIGURES OF SPEECH

As I grow longer in the tooth, by way of example, I find myself becoming more and more infatuated with words and especially with figures of speech. Love reading writings from scribes who can really “turn a phrase,” like the late Jim Murray and Red Smith, or the very-much-alive Tom Shatel, who could write for any paper, anywhere.

I love a good simile, or a good metaphor, even though I’m not sure I can discern the difference between the two, if there is one. And I love *idioms*, which seems to be sort of a catchall category for nifty phrases and figures of speech. In fact, my *hands down* favorite bathroom book is entitled: *Dictionary of idioms and their origins* by Linda and Roger Flavell. The book contains hundreds of idioms and their differing meanings and origins. A sampling of these expressions follow:

on the horns of a dilemma
hook, line and sinker
cutting the Gordian Knot
to beat into a cocked hat
barking up the wrong tree

Idiom of the Week

One of my all-time favorite idioms from this book, and its history/origin, is as follows:

to go haywire.

Definition: to go wrong, to be out of order, to go completely out of control; to become erratic, disturbed.

Origin: One interpretation of the origin of this phrase is based upon the real purpose of hay wire, which is to bind up bales of hay. Hay wire is thin and easily bendable but it is also very strong, requiring cutters to break it. Once the tight wires would around a bale have been snipped, however, they spring apart and writhe wildly and dangerously in the air, totally out of control.

GAME TIME, REVISITED

Although I have long-since finished reading Angell's *Game Time*, and am now deep into another of his books, there are a couple of stories that I still need to share from *Game Time*. Again, please indulge me.

John Franco

Franco's tears and toughness came as no surprise. A five-ten (at best) lefty reliever and stopper, he has compiled eighteen years in the majors and four hundred and twenty-two saves on attitude and the cutter. No fastball. He's a local guy all the way, the son of a city sanitation worker and a product of Lafayette High and St. John's University. Watching him at work all this time--he came aboard the Mets in 1990--you understood always that he would be only just good enough for the crisis at hand. Even when he closed the deal--got rid of the last batter of the day on a changeup and came down off the mound yelling and punching the air--he looked more human than triumphant: a Met like the rest of us, living out his wildest dream. Catching him again here, perhaps for the thousandth time, I saw that his snapping dark eyes, the cool little head loll, the tongue that rolls out in the middle of a laugh, the dismissive "Naah!," and the rest--clean-line haircut and a downturned dark mustache--were all New York, but of a kind we know better now than we used to. He's a firefighter.

On Curt Schilling and Randy Johnson of the 2001 World Series Champion Arizona Diamondbacks

Randy Johnson, the left-handed Ionic column, had arrived as a free agent two seasons before, signing on for \$52.4 million over four years. He and Schilling simply panzered the National League this summer, accounting for forty-seven percent of the team's wins, and winning nine of the pair's eleven starts in the playoffs. Johnson, who is 38, struck out 372 batters in the course of his 21-6 summer, and he has just picked up a third successive Cy Young award; his opposite number is Clemens, who took the honor for the sixth time.

Schilling, with that dominating jaw and rock-star pack of hair, is attractive and smart and--well, we can no longer say "overassured," can we?--asked by a reporter about the "mystique and aura" of the Yankees, he said they sounded like a pair of strippers to him.

On Bonds after the 2002 World Series

I will take a pass on Bonds' eventual niche in the pantheon--though it's hard to disagree with the *Chronicle* columnist Ray Ratto, who rates him perhaps the third-best player ever, behind only Ruth and Mays. Ratto said that Barry could never expect to climb higher, and Bonds was burned about the restriction as soon as he read it. My useful friend Charles Einstein took a longer view, in the letter he sent along a week or so after this piece ran in *The New Yorker*. "I think I would agree about Bonds being third to Ruth and Mays," he wrote. "Presumably this would give us a second-string all-time outfield of Aaron, DiMaggio, and Ted Williams(!). And thus a third string of Clemente, Mantle, and Ty Cobb(!!). But who among us wants to be the one to inform Stan Musial that he couldn't even make the third team?"

Well, boys, that's it for this issue. Hope you enjoyed it.

Next issue: Who Knows?

Skipper