



Bob Gibson and Stan Musial,
Spring Training 1961, Tampa Bay

NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE

SEASON XXXVI



Angry no more.

FROM THE BULLPEN

2020 Campaign

Edition No. 12

July 2, 2020

DRAFT DAY JULY 20 AT 6 PM

Gentlemen:

Assuming that there is a professional baseball season,¹ the Hot Stove League will hold its 2020 Draft via Zoom technology on the evening of Monday, July 20, beginning at 6 p.m. This blessed event was scheduled for this date via our recent Zoom meeting set up by Sunny, which took place on Monday, June 29, at which time--will wonders never cease--ten of the thirteen of us were able to figure out how to access the meeting and participate. Only the oldest (Underbelly and SloPay) and youngest (Tirebiter) among us were unable to participate, for reasons about which we will not speculate here.

In any event, make sure that you have the Draft on your calendar, and let the preparations begin!

IN CELEBRATION OF MASTHEADS

I thought it would be fun for all of us to take a look at the various mastheads that we have used in our league organ (*From the Bullpen*), since its inception many moons ago. So without further ado, here you are:

¹ And we all know that this is a huge assumption at this point, but we remain ever hopeful.

2020 Season 36



Bob Gibson and Stan Musial,
Spring Training 1961, Tampa Bay


NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE

SEASON XXXVI




Angry no more.

2019 Season 35



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



2018 Season 34



Bob Gibson

The Nebraska Hot Stove League

CELEBRATING
50TH
ANNIVERSARY

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



Denny McLain

2017 Season 33

From the Bullpen

"The People's Newspaper"

For People Who Want to Know the Real Truth



The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have little. --[Franklin D. Roosevelt](#)

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek. --[Barack Obama](#)

It is amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit. --[Harry S. Truman](#)

It's all about pitching. --[David D. Ernst](#)

Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country. --[John F. Kennedy](#)

Most importantly I never sent classified material on my email and I never received any that was marked classified. --[Hillary Clinton](#)

Let me say something that may not be great politics. And that is that the American people are sick and tired of hearing about your damn emails. --[Bernie Sanders](#)

2016 Season 32

The Nebraska Hot Stove League

2016 Season Campaign



SCOTT KRAUSE
manager LINCOLN CHIEFS

SCOTT ALLEN KRAUSE
Height: 6'3"
Weight: 225
Home: 5516 So. 49th
Lincoln, NE 68516
Throws: Right Bats: Right
Born: July 14, 1958
Phone: 402-423-4500
Fax: 402-423-9535

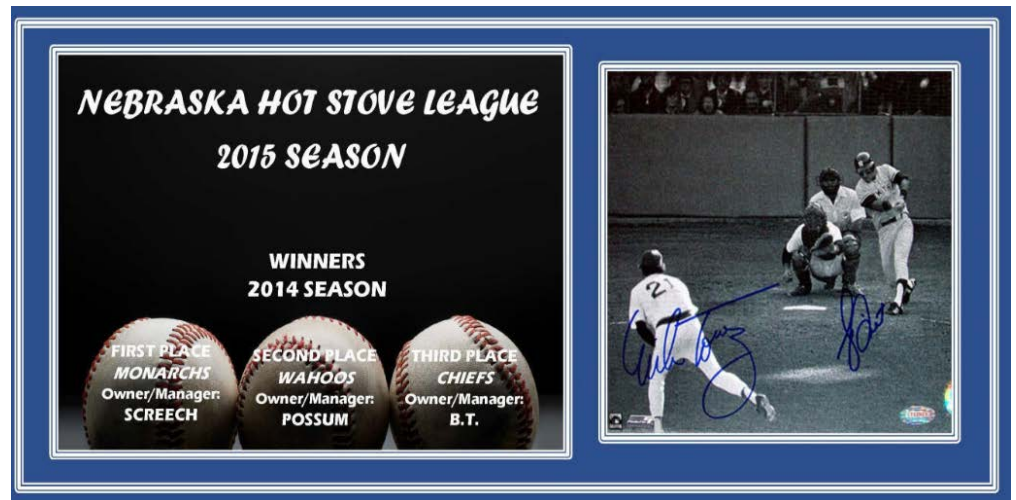
After an illustrious career as a two sport star at Lincoln Plus X High School, Scott has used his game hardened knowledge and street smart savvy to carve out an unprecedented twin success story. First as a highly respected community leader and peerless entrepreneur of many successful enterprises; and secondly, as the crafty helmsman of the dynasty called The Lincoln Chiefs. It is a story unrivaled, and no doubt shall remain so.

LINCOLN CHIEFS
1996 HSL CHAMPION



CHIEFS
96•11•13•15

2015 Season 31



2014 Season 30




2013 Season 29




2012 Season 28

NEBRASKA



**28th Year of Brotherhood and Baseball
Twenty Twelve Campaign**



The Georgia Peach and The Great Commoner

2011 Season 27



NN **Nebraska Hot Stove League**
Eastern Division, Omaha, NE
2011 Season

2010 Season 26



From the Bullpen
Official Publication of the
Nebraska Hot Stove League

2009 Season 25

From the Bullpen
Official Publication of the
Nebraska Hot Stove League



Brothers
25 years
Competitors
1985 - 2009

2008 Season 24



*Welcome to
The Nebraska Hot
Stove League*


Est. 1985

2008 Season Edition No. 1 January 1, 2008

2007 Season 23


From the Bullpen

Official Publication of The



NEBRASKA

Hot Stove League




2007 Season Edition No. 1 January 31, 2007

2006 Season 22


From the Bullpen

Official Publication of The



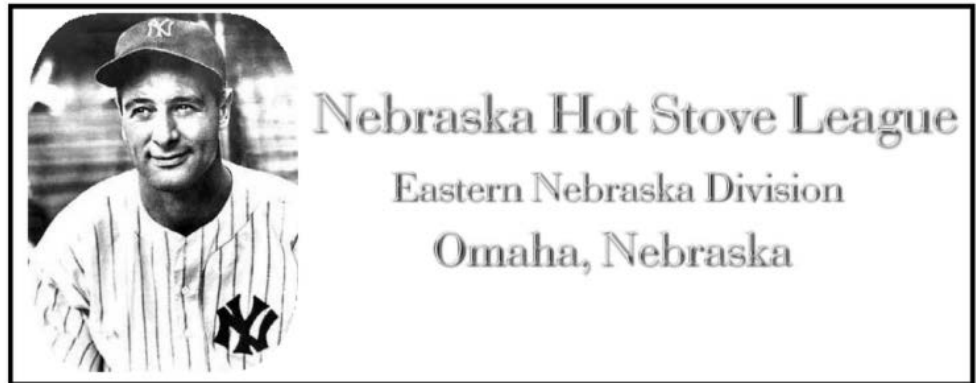
NEBRASKA

Hot Stove League



2006 Season Edition No. 1 January 1, 2006

2005 Season 21

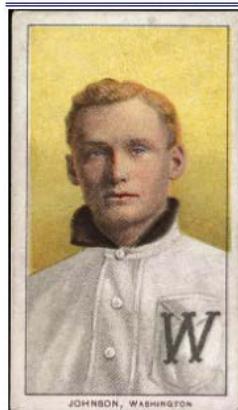


2005 Season

Edition No. 1

January 3, 2005

2004 Season 20



From the Bullpen

*Official Publication of the
Nebraska Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
Omaha, Nebraska*

2004 Season

Edition No. 1

January 2, 2004

2003 Season 19



From the Bullpen
Official Publication of the
Nebraska Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
Omaha, Nebraska

2003 Season

Edition No. 1

January 16, 2003

2002 Season 18

From the Bullpen

Official Publication of the
Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division



2002 Season

Edition No. 1

February 6, 2002

2001 Season 17

FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of the
Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division



2001 Season

Edition No. 2

February 22, 2001

2000 Season 16



FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of The Hot Stove League

Eastern Nebraska Division

2000 Season Edition No. 1

January 6, 2000

1999 Season 15



FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of The Hot Stove League

Eastern Nebraska Division

1999 Season Edition No. 1

January 19, 1999

1998 Season 14
 1997 Season 13
 1996 Season 12
 1995 Season 11
 1994 Season 10
 1993 Season 9
 1992 Season 8
 1991 Season 7
 1990 Season 6
 1989 Season 5
 1988 Season 4
 1987 Season 3
 1986 Season 2
 1985 Season 1



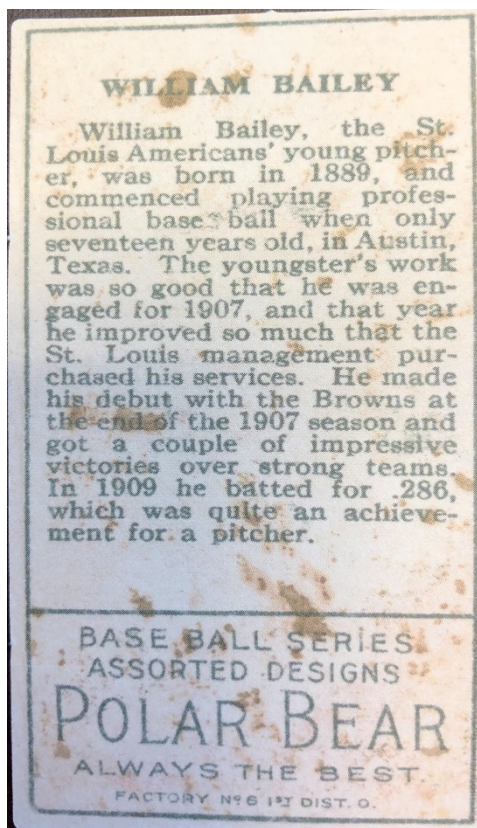
From the Bullpen

Official Publication of
 The Hot Stove League
 Eastern Nebraska Division
 1998 Season

Just one more reminder of how fortunate we are to have the very talented Linda at the wheel. Thanks, Linda!

BASEBALL CARDS FROM THE PAST

I recently happened across a packet of really cool old baseball card reproductions, and I share with you now the card for William Bailey, a pitcher for the St. Louis Browns, who batted .286 in 1909.



OF BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIPS

I don't know how many of you read the article in the newspaper last Sunday, about two former NFL players, one Black and one white, who now live in Omaha and have become the best of friends. The part about Dave Tollefson being pulled over in San Francisco when he was 19 years of age, and his three Black friends' reactions to the cop stop, was revelatory. I hope you find it as inspirational as I did.

Sunday World-Herald

JUNE 28, 2020 • SUNRISE EDITION • REAL. FAIR. ACCURATE.

OMAHA.COM



AMOS/SMITH - MINNESOTA VIKINGS. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS AND Z LONG/THE WORLD-HERALD

FRIENDSHIP ON THE FIELD GREW STRONG OFF IT

By DIRK CHATELAIN
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

This was not your typical bump-into-each-other-in-the-grocery-store moment.

Roughly 50,000 fans watched from the stadium seats. A couple of million more on TV. In December 2010, the Minnesota Vikings and New York Giants tussled in a critical NFL game when, by chance, two small-college overachievers lined up face-to-face before a punt.

Dave Tollefson decided to extend

Retired pro football players and 'odd couple' value their relationship more than ever

Kenny Onatolu, at left, who played with the Minnesota Vikings, and Dave Tollefson, formerly with the New York Giants, share Nebraska ties and a friendship that first blossomed a decade ago on the football field. Onatolu is the author of a children's book, "Two of a Kind," about two best friends, one white and one black.

an invitation to Kenny Onatolu. The 300-pound Giant looked at the Viking linebacker.

"Hey, Kenny!"

"Yeah?" said Onatolu, puzzled.

"You live in Omaha?"

"Yeah."

"I live right by you. We should get together."

That's about the time Minnesota snapped the ball. Tollefson's job was to block Onatolu. Keep him away from the New York punt returner. Tollefson

See Athletes: Page 2

Athletes: 'It was like a courtship. ... Me and Kenny are like the odd couple'

Continued from Page 1

did more than that.

"I just grabbed ahold of him," Tollefson says now. "Like wrapped my arms around him."

The play ended and Onatolu, who never got close to the punt returner, fumed at officials, begging for a penalty flag that never came. Ten years later, Big Dave still laughs about it. Soft-spoken Kenny still shakes his head.

"I'm telling you the truth," Onatolu says. "He held me."

There began a friendship that, in the wake of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis, these two retired athletes value more than ever. The white man from inner-city California and the black man from suburban Nebraska have often discussed their differences. Lately they've challenged and cheered each other to make a difference, leading conversations that educate.

"It's what I've been waiting for — open dialogue," Onatolu said. "I think people just don't know what's going on."

Said Tollefson: "We've continually swept this under the rug as Americans."

They started working out together after the 2010 season. Made sense. Tollefson was new in town — he married an Omaha girl — and didn't know any NFL peers. They understood each other's football past. Both played Division II football: Tollefson at Northwest Missouri State, Onatolu at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Kenny didn't get drafted. Didn't even get an NFL workout. In 2008, he was making \$250 a week on a practice squad in Canada, thinking about quitting for good. Then four Edmonton Eskimos linebackers got hurt. "They were stuck with me."

He shined the rest of the season and started getting calls from the NFL. He signed with the Vikings and, one year after nearly retiring, he played next to Brett Favre in the NFC championship game.

Tollefson could relate.

After high school, he spent two years working construction before landing at Northwest Missouri State. The Packers drafted him 253rd. One of his practice duties was to break in Brett Favre's shoe insoles — their cleats were the same size. On sore feet, he made the Green Bay practice squad and slowly started climbing the ladder to a six-year NFL career.

Tollefson knew hard work. But getting Kenny to be his workout partner took something extra.

"It was like a courtship," Dave

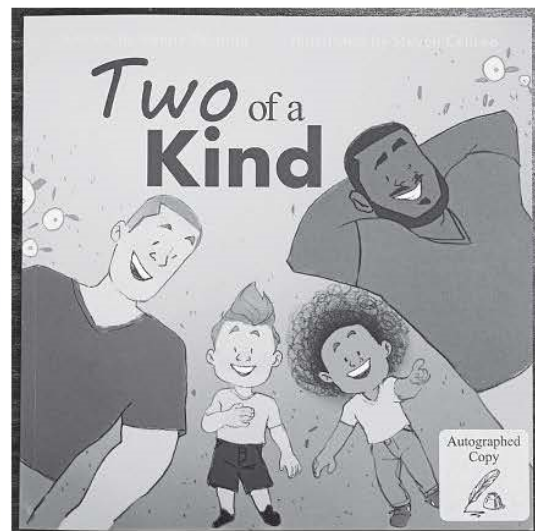


MINNESOTA VIKINGS

Kenny Onatolu, No. 55, went to high school in Papillion and played football at UNO before playing for the Minnesota Vikings in the NFL.



Dave Tollefson had a six-year NFL career, mostly with the New York Giants. Tollefson grew up in inner-city California but married an Omaha girl.



Z LONG/THE WORLD HERALD

Onatolu's children's book about his friendship with Tollefson, called "Two of a Kind," is enjoying a second wave of sales and readership.

said. "I had to run him down and make him like me. Me and Kenny are like the odd couple."

Kenny wears Sperrys. Dave wears Air Jordans. Kenny watches his money and the clock Dave not so much. Onatolu would show up at Dave's house at 9 a.m. only to find Dave just getting out of bed. "He'd get so mad at me."

But in the weight room, they pushed each other. They bonded.

"When you sweat and bleed with someone," Tollefson said, "it forgives a really unique relationship. It was really pure because our success was dependent on each other."

Between those workouts, they had a few disagreements over "meathead" matters. Like when Tollefson claimed he was the hardest hitter in the NFL and Onatolu took genuine offense. Dave and Kenny also had hard discussions about life and race and stereotypes.

"We had some deep, deep conversations," Onatolu said.

Kenny appreciated that Dave wanted to know him as a person, not as a football player. Dave was the first white friend who ever asked Kenny what his full name means.

Olayiwola — Wealth
Kehinde — Twin
Adebawale — Crown is Home
Kenny's parents were Nigerian immigrants who came to America for school. Kenny and his twin brother, Taiwo, were born in 1982 in Chicago, the same year their father received his master's degree in business. They moved back to Nigeria for a few years, then eventually returned to America, settling in Papillion.

Dad sold insurance. Changing his first name to "Stan" helped him find a job. Later, he got his doctorate and became a professor.

The Onatolu twins experienced racism both blatant and subtle. At 11, a big chain store opened down the street and they noticed security officers following them "all the time." When a scuffle broke out at basketball practice, a teammate called Kenny the N-word.

Friends teased them about getting a summer tan. Or when it was dark outside, they'd say, "We can't see Kenny."

"Just really stupid, immature stuff," Onatolu said. "But hurtful."

In college, bar owners hassled him for dress code violations, even when he dressed like his white friends. Once, at a party, he saw a guy push a girl, prompting a call to the police. The cops showed up and the girl — a stranger — pointed instead at Kenny and his brother.

Tollefson recognized those stories. He grew up in Concord, California, a melting pot east of Oakland far rougher than Papillion.

His single mother didn't have money to send him to private school. He didn't graduate with his friends because he didn't have the grades. He spent the second semester of his senior year at a "continuation" high school, riding the bus with gangs.

At 19, Dave drove into San Francisco with three black friends, all college football players. He cut through a construction lane on Bay Bridge and got pulled over.

"The guy in the front throws his hands on the dash," Tollefson said. "The two guys in the back throw their hands on the back seat. I'm like, what are you guys doing?"

"It was really a life-changing moment. I was like, wow, I've never been afraid of the cops. And these guys are. It was crazy. It really made me think about what life is like for black people in America."

For years, Kenny said, he tried to draw attention to those injustices. "I've been screaming it since I was 10 years old. This isn't right. This isn't right."

But as an adult, he's concluded that "the black guy yelling, telling you why people are taking a knee" doesn't work. Doesn't change minds. It's white people who have empathy because they've educated themselves. White people like his wife, who posted on Facebook a couple of years ago.

It's sad when your own friends don't get it. Making black jokes isn't funny.

Her one remark did more to change Kenny's friends' habits than anything he'd ever said. One friend called him the same day and apologized. None have spoken an ill word since.

"We can yell all we want being African American man, but I think our voices don't carry weight because people expect it to come from us," Onatolu said.

Onatolu's football career ended in 2011 abruptly when he tore his triceps. Months later, Tollefson won his second Super Bowl with the Giants. Kenny came home and poured his time into Omaha youth. He worked at Boys Town. Now he's a high school rep with Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Tollefson was in his wedding, embracing the traditional Nigerian hats. When Kenny's twin got married, Dave delivered the special toast, making sure to highlight all the family accomplishments. There's a lawyer. There's a soldier. There's the twins' dad, "Dr. Onatolu." Dave made sure everyone knew.

"He's a good talker, man," Kenny said.

In Omaha, Kenny and his wife started a family. One day he came

up with an idea. A children's book about two best friends: one white, one black.

Most white parents don't teach their kids about other cultures, Kenny told Dave. They sit on the sidelines and allow preconceived notions to develop, through movies, sports, music. By adulthood, stereotypes have taken root.

"Race talks should start at a really early age," Kenny said.

That's the last Dave heard of the idea for 18 months. Then one day Dave got an email. Wow, he did it!

"I was so proud of him. Dude, who writes a book?!"

My name is Kenny Onatolu. I met my good friend, Dave, playing football. Now our sons are friends too. We tell them our old football stories and watch our tapes together. ... Dave has two Super Bowl rings. But I was stronger and faster than Dave. And my team beat his every time we played against each other.

They held a couple of book signings. Donated a bunch to schools.

They continued daily phone calls — sometimes a quick hello, sometimes 45 minutes. They shared their faith and books they've read.

The past month, those conversations have carried greater weight. The content hasn't changed, but there's more urgency.

Onatolu knows the old cliché "I don't see color." But we should see color, he says. Acknowledge implicit biases. Recognize cultural differences. Ask questions.

"See me as a black man."

Said Tollefson: "To say I don't see color is a cop-out. We are fortunate enough as a country to have people from every corner of the world. Every race. That is the beauty of it."

It's hard to see people in pain the past few weeks, Tollefson said. But

growth comes from discomfort.

"At some point, this bubble was going to burst. I hope it has and we can make strides toward making this a stronger, more unified country despite our differences."

Onatolu does see change since Floyd's death. Protests have rippled across the world. White people are educating white people, "pouncing" on old arguments and stereotypes.

"Wow, I've never seen that before," Kenny said. "So I think we have something here. It's not just a moment in time."

He sees white people, for the first time, reflecting on causes of racial disparity. Asking why.

It's easy to point to rap lyrics and black-on-black crime as the problem, Onatolu said. But those are merely symptoms. Understanding the disease requires curiosity. An understanding of Jim Crow laws, redlining, predatory loans, bad schools funded by low property taxes, mass incarceration via 1990s crime bills.

"How that decimated a generation of black fathers. Getting thrown in jail for life for weed offenses."

History does a good job of telling the truth, Onatolu said. "But we never learned that in history class."

The past few weeks, Kenny's children's book has enjoyed a second wave of sales and readership as parents look for ways to reach their kids. His best friend thinks it's pretty cool, too.

Ten years after the Giant bear hugged the Viking and wouldn't let go, Tollefson has just one complaint with "Two of a Kind." The illustrator.

"He made Kenny's arms bigger than mine."

dirk.chatain@owh.com, 402-549-4451
twitter.com/dirkchatain

STRUTHER MARTIN WOULD BE PROUD

Last week as I was preparing to head to Pittsburgh for my annual endoscopic ultrasound (this was year 13 in the Steel City), we had some good HSL email communication about the tearing down of the Confederate monuments and so forth. As is often the case, Sunny shared with us some very wise words about the importance of honest communication between members of our august group, which I share with you again now:

Brothers: I do not believe that the Dixie Chicks should "Shut up and sing" or LeBron should "Shut up and dribble."

I think we are more than baseball fans. We are citizens; intelligent hard-working citizens of a country that we all love.

It is not much of a secret that members of our group hold a variety of political views. In a way we in the HSL are a microcosm of a segment, (although admittedly, but not embarrassed to say, not particularly diverse segment...no big deal..) of our society.

So what I love about the e-mail exchanges of last evening is the different views, expressed eloquently and thoughtfully, yet

opposed respectfully and equally eloquently and thoughtfully. We can disagree. And we do disagree. There is no way that my political views will ever align with each and every member of our group. But because we know each other; have spent time with each other and love and respect each other to such a great extent, we can have such dialogue in a thoughtful and respectful manner. Our country needs more of this, not less.

We give each other a lot of crap over the years for a variety of foibles and fuck-ups....but damn if we don't keep coming together and horribly miss it when we can't.

I love it and have never been more proud of our group. Keep it up. Keep it thoughtful. Keep it respectful and Keep it coming! We can be something more than just a group of guys who love a game.

I miss you all and miss our game. We can go back to baseball, but no need to shelve our citizenship.

For me, the open dialogue continued in Pittsburgh with my brother Dan, a transplanted Texan through and through, and my old fraternity friend Brian Hennings, who was raised in a military family² and is as staunch a Republican I have ever known. After our procedures at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Brian picked us up and took us out to lunch and then golfing at his country club.³ After our nine holes of golf on a beautiful course, we went out to dinner and had a few cocktails and then launched into a very robust conversation about politics, Black Lives Matter, and all of Obama's many accomplishments throughout his eight years as president. It was great stuff--even though we could not have disagreed more on many of the subjects that we were talking about--but it was all done with the utmost respect, no anger, and with a true desire to understand someone else's point of view.

So what we didn't have here, as Struther Martin might say, was a "failure to communicate." It was great communication, from beginning to end, and I think we all three are better for it.

Bottom line, boys: Let's keep talking, even about today's difficult topics.

² His father Paul was a "bird colonel" and his mother was an air force wife to the Nth degree, moving their family something like 18 times in 19 years.

³ Treesdale, a Bushwood copycat, where Ben Roethlisberger is a member. And who also plays with his golf shirt untucked.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!

I hope you all have a terrific and safe July 4th holiday. God bless us, one and all.

Skipper

