



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. 15

July 31, 2020

Brethren:

It is with great pleasure that *From the Bullpen* brings you the first (and hopefully not the last) standings of the year. Below are the point totals through games of Sunday, July 26:

### STANDINGS THRU WEEK 1 ENDING July 26, 2020

1	Monarchs	295.3
2	Senators	236.9
3	Tigers	227.6
4	Wahoos	215.5
5	Bums	214.8
6	Cubs	211.9
7	Saints	201.5
8	Redbirds	193.0
9	The Moe Szyslaks	180.6
10	Blues	156.2
11	Skipjacks	144.9
12	Bear Devils	142.9
13	Bombers	115.7

**TOP 10 PITCHERS**

1.	Kyle Hendricks	Bums	46.0
2.	Shane Bieber	Senators	40.0
3.	Ross Stripling	The Moe Szyslaks	35.0
3.	Dylan Bundy	The Moe Szyslaks	35.0
5.	Lance Lynn	Tigers	34.0
5.	Trevor Bauer	Monarchs	34.0
7.	Sonny Gray	Cubs	33.0
8.	Tyler Chatwood	Skipjacks	32.0
8.	Sandy Alcantara	Cubs	32.0
10.	Carlos Carrasco	Senators	31.0

**BOTTOM 10 PITCHERS**

1.	Shohei Ohtani (Pitcher)	Saints	-18.00
2.	Rick Porcello	Tigers	-18.00
3.	Reynaldo López 10-Day IL	Blues	-13.00
4.	Lucas Giolito	Bear Devils	-11.00
5.	James Paxton	Bombers	-10.00
6.	Charlie Morton	Bombers	-6.00
7.	Gio González	Senators	-5.00
8.	Ryne Stanek	Saints	-5.00
9.	José Berríos	Cubs	-3.00
10.	Freddy Peralta	Skipjacks	-3.00

**TOP 10 HITTERS**

1.	Nelson Cruz	Monarchs	43.5
2.	Miguel Rojas	Bombers	34.9
3.	José Ramírez	Redbirds	27.7
4.	Justin Turner	Blues	25.7
5.	Eric Hosmer Day-to-Day	Monarchs	24.3
6.	Max Muncy	The Moe Szyslaks	24.1
7.	Ramón Laureano	Saints	23.0
7.	Giancarlo Stanton	Cubs	23.0
9.	C.J. Cron	Tigers	22.6
10.	Kyle Lewis	Cubs	22.5

**BOTTOM 10 HITTERS**

1.	Andrew McCutchen	Skipjacks	-4.5
2.	Gary Sánchez	Bombers	-3.9
3.	Kris Bryant	Tigers	-3.6
4.	Willie Calhoun	Saints	-3.5
5.	Eduardo Escobar	Senators	-3.0
5.	Miguel Sanó	The Moe Szyslaks	-3.0
7.	J.D. Davis	Bear Devils	-2.5
8.	Kevin Newman	Bums	-2.2
9.	Eugenio Suárez	Senators	-2.1
10.	Danny Santana	The Moe Szyslaks	-2.0

**WELCOME BACK!**

Many or most of you saw and heard the video clip written by Tom Verducci and narrated by Jon Hamm. Here is the transcript of this beautiful piece:

**WELCOME BACK, OLD FRIEND**  
**Written by Tom Verducci**  
**Read by Jon Hamm for the filmed performance**  
**July 24, 2020**

We have missed you dearly. 266 days passed since we have seen you. Since Daniel Hudson threw the last pitch past Michael Brantley [sound of ball hitting a mitt] and childlike joy ensued. "The Washington Nationals finished the fight." Never have we gone so long without you. "Pitchers and poets," Robert Frost wrote, "both have their moments. The intervals are the tough things." A global pandemic forced this longest of intervals. In such times, we need the comfort of the familiar. We need the brief getaway of a happy diversion. We need you, friend, as we have so often through trouble and tumult.

During World War I the Secretary of War made an allowance for the 1918 World Series to be played. In January 1942 FDR said you should continue through the war. He found baseball "thoroughly worthwhile to take our minds off work and war."

Amid racial unrest in 1968, blacks and whites celebrated together in the streets of Detroit because the Tigers won a championship.

After the 1989 Bay Area earthquake, the World Series resumed ten days later as a symbol of recovery. [crowd cheering in background] "Mike Piazza!" You played a similar role in 2001 after 9/11. You gave us a reason to hope again.

In the wake of the bombing in Boston in 2013 and the hurricane in Houston in 2017, you lifted the spirits of people all the way to World Series Championships.

Hope is your bedrock. Games are not bound by the expiration of time. "He is Mr. November."

As long as teams have an out left, they have hope. [Vin Scully said,] "In a year that has been so improbable, the impossible has happened." But if it doesn't work out, there is always tomorrow. [sound of a crack of a bat] "We will see you tomorrow night."

This is why we need you now. It is not because you heal us. You do not end wars, solve social injustice, or invent vaccines. We need the nourishment of your routine, a ballgame on the car radio, the way a game unfolds like a good book. [crowd cheering]

We also welcome what is new this year: a 60-game sprint, an instant rally in extra innings, a schedule of regional rivalries.

Reminders of the pandemic are everywhere: empty ballparks, social distancing, no arguing, spitting or seeds. Players staying home.

But what Bill Veeck once said has never been truer. "Baseball is almost the only orderly thing in a very unordered world. If you get three strikes, even the best lawyer in the world can't get you off."

You are our companion from childhood, and such friends have a special hold on us. [sounds of children clamoring for autographs]

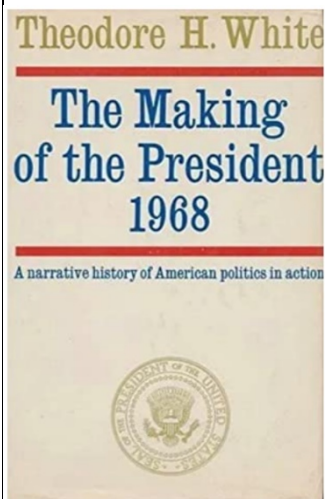
As best friends do, we pick up a conversation as if 266 days had never passed.

**Welcome back, old friend. It is so good to see you.**

#### **BOOK REPORT:**

*The Making of the President 1968*

by Theodore H. White



I just finished reading *The Making of the President 1968* by Theodore H. White<sup>1</sup>. Written and published in 1969, White employs the perspective of that time to detail one of the most tumultuous years in history. The parallels between that year and this year are astonishing.

In this book, Thomas White's in-real-time observations about the Tet offensive in January; the escalating American unrest with the war in Vietnam; the decision of "Clean Gene" McCarthy to enter the presidential primary race against an incumbent (LBJ) president; the senseless and hateful assassination of Martin Luther King; the scorching hot summer that saw rioting and looting in many cities across the country, including Omaha; the agonizing decision of Robert Kennedy to enter the primary race; the subsequent decision of LBJ to *not* run for reelection; the determination of sitting Vice President Hubert Humphrey to enter the presidential primary; the assassination of RFK in Los Angeles, just as he was declared the victor of the California primary; the choice of George Wallace to run for President as an independent, and the description of all of the hatred and racial divisiveness<sup>2</sup> that he preached and engendered as he toured across the country uttering his

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<sup>1</sup> A year or two ago I read *The Making of the President 1960* by the same author, which chronicled the closest-ever American election between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon, and it was spellbinding.

<sup>2</sup> Sound familiar?

abominable mantra, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!"; the Democratic convention in Chicago, where Mayor Daly's billy-club-wielding police brutalized the mostly young and white, peaceful and violent demonstrators alike; and ultimately, Tricky Dick's narrow election night victory over the passionate but pitiable Hubert H. Humphrey.

Like I said, some amazing parallels, and I could go on and on and on, but I won't. I'll simply leave you with some of the excerpts from the book that I found fascinating. First, about Lyndon Johnson:

- Were there no outside world, if America inhabited a satellite planet, capable of controlling its own environment, its own circumstances, its own future, Lyndon Johnson might conceivably have gone down as the greatest of twentieth-century Presidents.
- It is almost impossible to appreciate, at this close date in time, the monumental outline of Johnson's achievements in legislative architecture, within whose halls American life will proceed for a generation.
- Johnson could never acquire this dexterity, and thus there emerged one of the operative clichés of political discussion: the credibility gap. Which meant that the press believed the President lied to the nation.
- "Credibility gap" approached a mythic quality when in Korea he told the assembled troops, "My great-great-grandfather died at the Alamo," although his great-grandparents had not arrived in Texas until ten years after that massacre.
- Thus, of his troubles with the press, a friend remembers him saying, "I feel like a hound bitch in heat in the country. If you run, they chew your tail off; if you stand still, they slip it to you."
- Waking thus, day after day, year after year, to the acid shower of criticism, the man had become by 1968 an individual embittered in all his thinking. Isolated in the White House with a corporal's guard of devoted loyalists, he had developed what one of his staff members described as "Johnson's porcupine psychology," or, in his own words, a philosophy of "hunkering our heads down and taking it." As the campaign of 1968 approached, we find him, thus, almost a prisoner of his own bureaucracies, both governmental and political.

Some excerpts about Robert Kennedy:

- I had been traveling in California that day with Robert F. Kennedy, and was on his plane flying back to Oregon, where we arrived at the Benson Hotel in Portland at about 10:30 p.m. By that time the television networks had told Oregon and the nation that Kennedy had lost his race in the Democratic primary to Eugene McCarthy, the first election defeat any Kennedy had suffered anywhere in thirty consecutive primary and election contests dating back to John F. Kennedy's first entry in 1946.

- "Our country is in danger," he shrilled as he opened at Kansas State University, not just from the foreign enemies but above all from our own misguided policies. . . . [The Vietnam war] has divided Americans as they have not been divided since your state was called "Bloody Kansas." . . . I regard our policy there as bankrupt. . . . I am concerned that at the end of it all there will only be more Americans killed, more of our treasure spilled out; and because of the bitterness and hatred on every side of this war more hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese slaughtered; so that they may say as Tacitus said of Rome, 'They made a desert and called it peace.'"
- For, above all other themes in his campaign, beyond any program, the fire that burned most hotly in him was for the underprivileged--for the minorities, for the Negroes, for the Appalachians, for the Mexican-Americans. The enemies of Robert F. Kennedy had already made him a saint in the black wards of America; a hundred TV visions had captured the fire of his impatience, his swollen, throbbing sympathy for people who ached, hungered, or were sick and untended, or had no jobs.
- Kennedy would waste little rhetoric in the ghettos; the fury and indignation he felt at the condition of blacks in America he spent rather at university campuses or excoriating white audiences for their indifference. His speeches at black rallies were short; they knew what this campaign was all about--it was for equal opportunity ("That's it, man"), it was for jobs for everyone ("That's it, man") and for school equality ("That's it," would come the chant). And he was going to change it all and they were going to help him change it; only it was going to be a change without violence ("That's it, too," one heard an occasional shout when Bobby laid law-and-order on the line in a black district).
- Touring a deep ghetto with Bobby Kennedy was like being in the eye of a hurricane, and as dangerous.
- Over and over, his staff warned Kennedy of crowds; over and over, those who traveled warned of how close to the edge of violence he brought himself by exposing himself to mobs, friendly or otherwise. Yet he would not listen. When it came to blacks, or Mexicans, or Indians, or any underprivileged, there was no cold Bobby--he was the Liberator, on horse, screaming with every fiber of his being that this was the purpose of power and government, to take care of them; and he was careless of whatever danger, political or personal, might lurk on the way.
- Kennedy arrived late at his hotel suite to watch the final returns, and stood for a moment watching television as Eugene McCarthy conceded defeat. What mattered, McCarthy was saying eloquently, as Bobby watched, was what a candidate stood for--not whether he came in first, second or third. "That's not the way I was brought up," growled Bobby Kennedy, talking back to the image on television, "we were brought up to win."
- All the last ten days of his effort are clouded in memory by omens of violence; and in retrospect in these clouds Robert Kennedy was a lightning rod.

- Robert Kennedy always made fine copy and gave occasion to great filmic artistry; but there could be no doubt about the nature of his public image: he was the disturber. He meant what he said. If he were elected, he would perform as he promised and the country would change.
- One remembers best of the countless speeches of both men from California to Maine, from Cadillac Square in Detroit to New York's garment district, a passage they both shared and equally believed in. Either one, at any time, any place, when lost for words or for specific program would go into what we reporters used to call "the Dante sequence." Both quoted it in the same way: "Franklin D. Roosevelt, accepting his second Presidential nomination, said, 'Governments can err, Presidents do make mistakes, but the immortal Dante tells us that Divine Justice weighs the sins of the cold-blooded and the sins of the warm-hearted on a different scale. Better the occasional faults of a government living in the spirit of charity, than the consistent omissions of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference.' "

To them, indifference was the greatest sin of all; and neither was indifferent to any human cause, at home or abroad. Their voices mingle still in my memory, ringing at a score of street corners, the high-pitched tenor and timbre of sound so much alike, quoting Roosevelt quoting Dante. Their call was to the heart; that is why people voted for them.

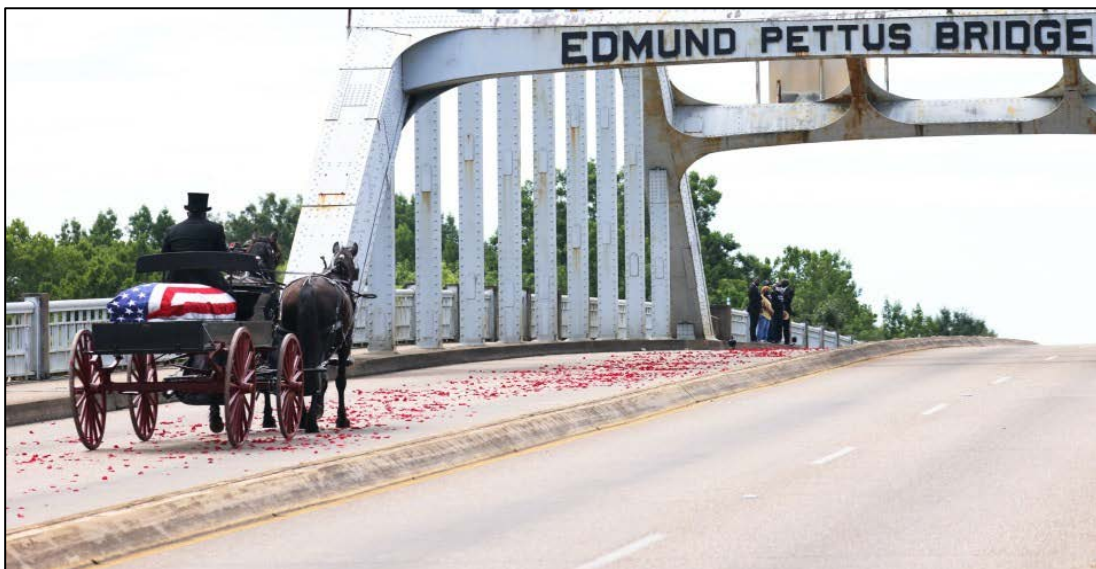
And a couple of George Wallace excerpts:

- His plane was an old war-vintage DC4, chartered from some obscure company. Pistol-packing Alabama state troopers accompanied him. The coffee was stale, the cheese sandwiches were dry; no liquor was permitted aboard, root beer was considered a hard drink, Coca-Cola and orange juice were approved; and smoking was frowned upon. In the forward compartment, in an aisle seat, sat George Wallace--a man obviously nervous in flight, with perhaps some remembered carry-over from rocking and tumbling his B29s had taken during the war. A big gold ring glistened on his finger, and in repose his somber face glowered. Occasionally he would run a comb through his sleek glossy hair, halfway between chestnut and jet black; and his close-set eyes were shrunken into deep, dark hollows under the great eyebrows. He was a very little man, almost a frail man, above all a nervous man, his hands twitching when he spoke, shifting from pocket to pocket as he rose.
- It was that evening, in Cicero, that one got the full flavor of the man and what he roused. Cicero is a solidly working-class suburb. Once the base of Scarface Al Capone (population 69,130 according to the 1960 census and almost entirely white), Cicero is afraid, as are other still-white working-class neighborhoods, of the black overflow from the central ghetto. In Cicero, Wallace was appealing to the solid under-lay of his Northern constituency. . . . As he spoke, the Cicero crowd rocked with him. He was saying what was on their minds, saying it like it is, saying it the way they said it to each other in the bars. And, so shortly after the Boston brutality

of the toward Humphrey, one could not but reflect on the counter-brutality that Wallace roused on the right. The left would not let Humphrey have his say. The right would not permit silent dissent at their meeting. While Wallace spoke, violence sputtered on the fringe of his Cicero crowd. A youth carrying a McCarthy placard found himself assailed; the attackers kicked his ankles, a fat middle-aged blonde woman pushed through the crowd and screamed, "Shoot 'em, kill 'em!" The youth carried a sign saying, DON'T LET WALLACE MAKE THIS A POLICE STATE. The fat woman clawed his face, slapped it. The crowd, approving her, yelled, "You nigger-loving homosexual!" "Take a bath, you dope addict!" An apparently Jewish reporter was taking notes, and several yelled, "Hey, you Hebe, you Jew bastard--how you doing, Moishe, you writing backwards?" As at Boston, it was an entirely new experience to me in campaigning. If the streets and the violence of the streets were to dominate American political campaigns, would we be forced then to fall back into the cold, manipulated world of the television media, from whose safe and sterile studio enclosures candidates would speak to people?

- The Wallace campaign, as it developed, made decent people ashamed to stand with George Wallace; it degraded their sense of themselves as Americans because it gave them no other cause but hate.

#### POINT OF PUBLISHER PRIVILEGE



i don't know if any of you watched it last Sunday, but the transport of John Lewis' body by a horse drawn caisson across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, where Bloody Sunday happened on March 7, 1965, was for me a very emotional, lump-in-the-throat moment. The paradox of his celebrated body being welcomed and glorified by Alabama State Troopers, some 55 years after his body (and those of some of the others) was beaten almost to death by Bull Connor's nightstick-wielding police force is remarkable. In large part because of the tireless, nonviolent protests of this heroic man--who was arrested 45 times in his life, five of them after he became a congressman--our country has come a very long way on Civil



Rights. There is still a long, long way to go on the topic of racial equality, but we can hope and dream that the past is prologue for our future and the future of our children and our children's children.

There is a one or two hour special on the remarkable life of the extraordinary John Lewis next Tuesday night. I encourage everyone to watch it.

### **A POTUS BASEBALL MOMENT**



"I am the greatest of all time."<sup>3</sup>

"You've never seen anything like it."

"Very powerful."

"Believe me."

"Trust me."

"Sad."

In closing, have a great weekend.

Skipper

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<sup>3</sup> Not Rickey Henderson, apparently.