

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. 19

September 25, 2020

Gentlemen:

The **Cubs**, who continue to lead the standings in the Hot Stove League through the end of nine weeks with 4300.7 points, and with a 214.7 point lead over the **Bear Devils** through Sunday, seem destined to win the 2020 Short-Season Title (SST). However, the top-scoring team in the league for the week was the rapidly-rising **Monarchs**, who put together a superlative 575.4-point week to press their team into contention for an Upper Division finish. The second-highest scoring team for the week was the **Cubs**, with 537.2 points, followed by the never-say-die **Bear Devils** with 532.7 points. The last place **Moe Szyslaks** trailed the league with 313.9 points for Week 9, virtually cementing a last place finish for Underbelly's sorry squad.

Here are the standings and point totals for the week:

STANDINGS THRU WEEK 10 ENDING SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

1	Cubs	4300.7	-
2	Bear Devils	4086.0	214.7
3	Bums	3932.4	368.3
4	Wahoos	3814.2	486.5
5	Senators	3774.7	526.0
6	Saints	3760.1	540.6
7	Monarchs	3745.4	555.3
8	Redbirds	3590.2	710.5
9	Skipjacks	3350.7	950.0
10	Bombers	3344.0	956.7
11	Tigers	3187.8	1112.9
12	Blues	3120.7	1180.0
13	The Moe Szyslaks	2965.9	1334.8

POINTS FOR WEEK 10 ENDING SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

1	Monarchs	575.4
2	Cubs	537.2
3	Bear Devils	532.7
4	Wahoos	527.5
5	Skipjacks	493.2
6	Bombers	439.8
7	Senators	439.4
8	Bums	427.9
9	Tigers	426.0
10	Redbirds	396.6
11	Blues	393.3
12	Saints	390.6
13	The Moe Szyslaks	313.9

TOP 10 PITCHERS

1.	Shane Bieber	Senators	355.0
2.	Lance Lynn	Tigers	300.0
3.	Yu Darvish	Monarchs	288.0
4.	Trevor Bauer	Monarchs	269.0
5.	Dinelson Lamet	Bear Devils	263.0
6.	Kenta Maeda	Bums	254.0
7.	Gerrit Cole	Wahoos	253.0
8.	Kyle Hendricks	Bums	243.0
9.	Jacob deGrom	Saints	242.0
10.	Corbin Burnes	Bums	238.0

WHO'S HOT -- PITCHERS

1.	Dinelson Lamet	Bear Devils	67.0
2.	Antonio Senzatela	Senators	62.0
3.	Carlos Carrasco	Senators	56.0
	Pablo López	Wahoos	56.0
5.	Tanner Houck	Skipjacks	55.0
6.	Clayton Kershaw	Cubs	54.0
7.	Corbin Burnes	Bums	52.0
8.	Jose Urquidy	Tigers	51.0
9.	Trevor Bauer	Monarchs	49.0
10.	Tony Gonsolin	Monarchs	45.0

WHO'S NOT -- PITCHERS



1.	Alex Young	Blues	-13.0
	Julio Teheran	Redbirds	-13.0
3.	Dylan Bundy	The Moe Szyslaks	-11.0
4.	Ryan Castellani	Bombers	-10.0
	Seth Lugo	Saints	-10.0
6.	Austin Gomber	Wahoos	-9.0
7.	Sixto Sánchez	Saints	-8.0
8.	Danny Duffy	Bombers	-7.0
	Yusei Kikuchi	Monarchs	-7.0
10.	Tanner Roark	Senators	-6.0

TOP 10 HITTERS

1.	Freddie Freeman	Blues	291.7
2.	José Abreu	Cubs	271.2
3.	Manny Machado	Bear Devils	268.6
4.	Fernando Tatis Jr.	Bear Devils	268.0
5.	Marcell Ozuna	Bombers	253.0
6.	Mike Trout	Bear Devils	251.0
7.	Trea Turner	Bombers	250.1
8.	Mookie Betts	Bums	248.8
9.	José Ramírez	Redbirds	243.9
10.	Luke Voit	The Moe Szyslaks	243.6

WHO'S HOT -- HITTERS

1.	Kole Calhoun	Bums	62.5
2.	DJ LeMahieu	Cubs	62.2
3.	Luke Voit	The Moe Szyslaks	55.2
4.	José Ramírez	Redbirds	46.5
5.	Clint Frazier	Bombers	46.0
6.	Salvador Perez	Skipjacks	45.5
7.	José Abreu	Cubs	44.5
8.	Ryan Braun	Cubs	42.5
9.	Joey Votto	Skipjacks	40.2
10.	Lourdes Gurriel Jr.	Saints	40.0

WHO'S NOT -- HITTERS

1.	Eduardo Escobar	Senators	-5.9
2.	Matt Carpenter	Wahoos	-4.7
3.	Yuli Gurriel	Skipjacks	-3.8
4.	Isiah Kiner-Falefa	Bums	-3.3
5.	Kyle Schwarber	Bums	-3.0
6.	Nick Senzel	Blues	-2.5
	Charlie Blackmon	Bums	-2.5
8.	Hunter Dozier	Monarchs	-2.3
9.	Joey Bart	Saints	-1.7
10.	Luis Urias	Saints	-1.1

With only one week in competition remaining in the season, the best of luck to you all in our abbreviated 2020 Campaign.

IN PRAISE OF KETCHIKAN



HQ and I returned earlier this week from a junket to Ketchikan, Alaska, where an MD client of mine was requested to give a deposition and wanted legal counsel by his side. I don't hate it when that happens. Anyway, it was a marvelous trip to Alaska's "1st City," which in ordinary times is a haven for cruise ships (an average of seven per day) and hence bursting with commodious seafood restaurants and purveyors of adult beverages.

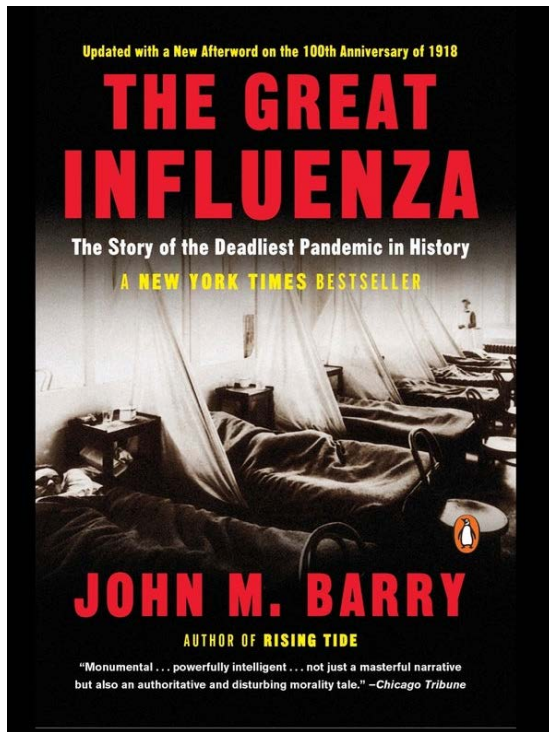
The best part of our trip by far was our sea plane junket to Misty Fiords National Monument, and throughout the unspoiled beauty of a 2.2-million-plus acre national park in the Tongass National Forest that was designated as such by an executive order of President Carter, one of the few gleaming accomplishments of his presidency. This is some of the most beautiful, unspoiled, and pristine land in the whole world, and our pilot¹ skillfully touched us down on one of the many breathtakingly beautiful glacial lakes for a look-see. As seen below, even with more than two million acres in which to socially distance, we responsibly wore our masks to prevent spread of the coronavirus to the Alaskan wildlife.



¹ In one of those crazy small world coincidences, our pilot was a 1970's graduate of Omaha Westside by the name of Michelle Masden, who was able to confirm PAwesome's legendary status in the Westside marching band.

A place of unparalleled beauty and featuring some of the friendliest folks you will ever meet anywhere, if you ever have a chance to spend a few days in Ketchikan, I highly recommend it.

BOOK REPORT:
The Great Influenza



I just recently finished up a book that I have been slogging through for the past six weeks or so, entitled *The Great Influenza*, by John Barry, published in 2004. I picked up the book to read after an acquaintance suggested that it would be a good read to help put the current COVID-19 pandemic in perspective. In some ways it did, because by reading it you realize that even though the world's best physicians at that time did not come up with a silver bullet vaccine to prevent influenza, or an outright cure for the disease, the world in fact survived the pandemic and eventually returned to normal, although arguably not until 1920, more than 1½ years after it first started killing people in mass numbers.

Although the book was a lot more about the science of trying to figure out what was causing the influenza--and about developing a vaccine and a cure than about the human interest stories--I still picked up a few things worth passing along to my brethren:

- The influenza that started the so-called Spanish flu epidemic did not begin in Spain at all but in rural, western Kansas, according to the book, where a few young men who were infected joined the Armed Forces to fight in World War I and began the spread across the country, and eventually the world;
- The people who became the sickest and died in the greatest numbers were not the frail and the infirm as in today's pandemic, but the healthiest and heartiest of the population, people in their twenties, reportedly because their immune systems were so strong that they went into "overdrive" (not a scientific term, I know), and inexplicably developed pneumonias in their lungs which killed rapidly;
- The great majority of the deaths from the so-called Spanish flu occurred in September 1918 when the influenza first began to spread to populations that were not previously exposed to earlier influenza epidemics, and had not developed any "herd" immunities against it;
- President Woodrow Wilson himself, while in Europe attempting to negotiate terms of surrender for Germany at the tail end of World War I, was reportedly afflicted with it, and had to engage in negotiations from his bed, where other heads of state had to visit him to discuss reparations for World War I. According to the book, his affliction with

influenza affected his mental capabilities to a significant degree, and he ended up conceding to the very harsh terms insisted upon by French Prime Minister Clemenceau, which many people believe were responsible for the environment which allowed Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany to assume power a generation later.

Perhaps my favorite part of the book, however, is the lesson that it attempts to teach about how to deal with a pandemic. Long before our current POTUS shit-show, the author wrote that in order to effectively deal with a pandemic, the people need to be told the truth, and need to be able to trust their government leadership². Unfortunately, our current Tangerine-Topped Totalitarian occupant of the oval office didn't read this book--and probably hasn't read any book since finishing off *Green Eggs and Ham* in second grade--and his handlers failed to include this advice in their two-sentence briefing of him on mastering a pandemic.

So there you go.

HAPPY CENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY, ROGER ANGELL



As pointed out to me last week by Sunny, the GOAT baseball writer Roger Angell turned 100 years young last Saturday, September 19, and this prompted me to conduct a brief internet search on him, which disclosed that there is a recently-published book about Angell and his unparalleled career as a baseball scribe, entitled *No Place I Would Rather Be: Roger Angell and a Life in Baseball Writing*. Written by Joe Bonobo and published by the University of Nebraska Press³, I decided to order this new book and am currently waiting on its arrival. More later on this one.

By sheer fortuity, I had with me on our Alaska junket the September 14, 2020 issue of *The New Yorker*, which contained a *Department of Hoopla* article entitled *Roger Angell at a Hundred*⁴, reporting on the celebration of Angell's centennial birthday back in August in Brooklin, Maine, where Janet Wills, the governor of Maine, certified the occasion with the official proclamation of *Roger Angell Day*. She said:

In Maine, while we brag about our ponds and peninsulas, our gardens, our granite, our grandkids and green fields, and goats old and young, our woods, our words and our language are the dearest thing to us. That is why I'm here to honor a premier wordsmith, Roger Angell—someone who has used words to elevate us, to inspire us, to get at the truth. He tells it straight. He writes about winning and he writes about the pain of loss and regaining life again.

² "For if there is a single dominant lesson from 1918, it's that governments need to tell the truth in a crisis. Risk communication implies managing the truth. You don't manage the truth. You tell the truth." (Page 460) "Those in authority must retain the public's trust. The way to do that is to distort nothing, to put the best face on nothing, to try to manipulate no one." (Page 461)

³ Which incidentally was founded in 1941, and is the largest university press between Chicago and California, so go Big Red!

⁴ In which the author, Mark Singer, among other things, points out that Angell has the unique distinction of being in the Baseball Hall of Fame--in the writer's section--and has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

In his remarks which followed, after this wonderful centenarian provided his list of thank-yous for the occasion, he ended his brief remarks in the following way:

I want you all please to keep your distance--social distance--be very careful. And if there's any impulse to rush the podium here and pick me up on your shoulders and carry me around, resist that.

Love it. The guy still has it, at 100 years of age.

PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM

And finally, I leave you with the reprinting of a Top Ten List about our soon-to-be 2020 HSL Champion, Shamu, from the March 5, 1996, edition of *From the Bullpen*:

SHAMU'S TOP TEN LIST OF REASONS FOR RELOCATING TO OMAHA

10. Running out of disguises to wear to Lincoln All-U-Can-Eat restaurants.
9. Found himself starting to enjoy Ken Hambleton's columns in *Lincoln Star*.
8. Heard new Chew Depot outlet store to open soon in Omaha.
7. Can't handle nightly drive home from riverboat casinos in Council Bluffs.
6. Seven years of mishandling catastrophic claims losses at Allied almost ready to come to head.
5. Feels time is right in Omaha for Chubby Crimson Haired and Mustachioed Irishman Wax Museum.
4. Plans to attend Clarkson Nursing College at night.
3. Concerned about adverse publicity from participation in all-nude bowling tournament at Leisure Lanes, and photo exposé to appear in *Lincoln Star* in near future.
2. "Disappointed" with recent employment review from supervisor ("You're fired, Sinclair, and you'll never work in this town again!").
1. Two words: Millard Days

Have a good one.

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