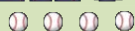


NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE



SEASON XXXVII



2020 HSL Champion
West Des Moines Cubs
Manager: Shamu

400

FROM THE BULLPEN

2021 Campaign

Edition No. 11

June 11, 2021

BOMBERS BLITZKRIEG!

Brethren:

The story of Week 9 in the Hot Stove League is that the **Bombers** continued with their now three-week long blitzkrieg, posting the unthinkable total of 645.9 points for the week, and undoubtedly establishing a new record two-week mark with a total of 1251.5 during the last fortnight. This remarkable outburst allowed the **Bombers** to close the gap between 1st and 2nd place to a mere 24.0 points, leaving the 3rd place **Saints**, the 4th place **Skipjacks** and the 5th place **Cubs** in the dust. Through this bold statement, Mouse has given unmistakable notice that he intends to etch his name on The Cup at season's end.

The other stories for Week 9 are that the **Senators** posted a third-best total of 484.5 points, leapfrogging the **Monarchs** into 11th, while the moribund **Wahoos** could only manage 395.8 points, dropping to 9th, and the **Skipjacks** had the lowest total for the week with 360.9 points. Trending down, both.

Here are the standings through Week 9, and the point totals for Week 9:

HSL STANDINGS THRU WEEK 9 ENDING JUNE 6, 2021

Rank	Team	Points	Pts Back
1	Bums	4759.0	-
2	Bombers	4735.0	24.0
3	Saints	4489.6	269.4
4	Skipjacks	4378.5	380.5
5	Cubs	4329.4	429.6
6	Redbirds	4224.2	534.8

7	Tribe	4197.2	561.8
8	Tigers	4190.7	568.3
9	Wahoos	4108.9	650.1
10	Bears	4102.4	656.6
11	Senators	3998.2	760.8
12	Monarchs	3952.6	806.4
13	Blues	3762.0	997.0

POINT TOTALS FOR WEEK 9

Rank	Team	Points
1	Bombers	645.9
2	Redbirds	565.4
3	Senators	484.5
4	Tribe	468.5
5	Saints	464.7
6	Tigers	451.1
7	Cubs	448.5
8	Bums	433.9
9	Blues	432.5
10	Monarchs	404.7
11	Wahoos	395.8
12	Bears	374.3
13	Skipjacks	360.9

TOP 25 PITCHERS

1.	Kevin "Soon to Be Out of" Gausman	Saints	359.0
2.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	331.0
3.	Brandon Woodruff	Redbirds	329.0
4.	Gerrit "Old King" Cole	Bums	319.0
5.	Max Scherzer	Tigers	310.0
6.	Zack Wheeler	Wahoos	304.0
7.	Shane Bieber	Bombers	302.0
8.	Tyler "Tear Down This Wall" Glasnow	Bears	300.0
9.	Jacob deGrom	Wahoos	298.0
10.	Yu "Betcha" Darvish	Blues	286.0
11.	Freddy Peralta	Senators	281.0
12.	Julio Urías	Tigers	263.0
	Trevor "Jolly" Rogers	Bums	263.0
14.	John "A Man of" Means	Cubs	262.0
15.	Walker "Texas Ranger" Buehler	Skipjacks	260.0

	Corbin Burnes	Redbirds	260.0
17.	Clayton Kershaw	Senators	258.0
18.	Zack Greinke	Senators	250.0
19.	Lance Lynn	Bums	248.0
	Chris Bassitt	Tribe	248.0
21.	Kyle Gibson	Monarchs	244.0
22.	Jack Flaherty	Tigers	243.0
	Aaron Civale	Monarchs	243.0
24.	Joe Musgrove	Bums	242.0
25.	Carlos Rodón	Bums	239.0

(Shades of Chris Berman, the formerly amusing sportscaster who, in this commentator's humble opinion, has completely overstayed his welcome and is now paying the bills by shamelessly touting "CarShield" on cable TV (together with another has-been, Ice T, or is it Iced T?), pitching a horrible product to an unsuspecting audience with an average IQ in the single digits. Shame on you, Boomer!¹)

WHO'S HOT - PITCHING

1.	Jacob deGrom	Wahoos	78.0
2.	Corbin Burnes	Redbirds	65.0
3.	Luis Garcia	Bombers	64.0
4.	Germán Márquez	Tigers	59.0
5.	Marcus Stroman	Bombers	49.0
6.	Wade Miley	Senators	45.0
7.	José Berríos	Blues	44.0
8.	Rich Hill	Bombers	43.0
	Kyle Hendricks	Wahoos	43.0
10.	Sean Manaea	Skipjacks	42.0
	Blake Snell	Blues	42.0
	Logan Gilbert	Saints	42.0
13.	Kevin Gausman	Saints	40.0
14.	Freddy Peralta	Senators	38.0
15.	Sandy Alcantara	Wahoos	37.0
	Max Scherzer	Tigers	37.0
	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	37.0
18.	Ryan Yarbrough	Redbirds	36.0
19.	Framber Valdez	Tribe	35.0
	Jorge López	Skipjacks	35.0
21.	Zack Greinke	Senators	34.0
	Austin Gomber	Bombers	34.0

WHO'S NOT - PITCHING

1.	Carlos Martínez	Wahoos	-29.0
2.	Matt Shoemaker	Saints	-25.0
3.	David Peterson	Cubs	-13.0
4.	Alex Wood	Bums	-11.0
	Sam Hentges	Bombers	-11.0
6.	Michael Pineda	Saints	-9.0
7.	Madison Bumgarner	Senators	-8.0
8.	Mike Foltyniewicz	Tribe	-7.0
	Hyun Jin Ryu	Skipjacks	-7.0
10.	John Means	Cubs	-6.0
	Steven Matz	Saints	-6.0
12.	Jake Odorizzi	Bears	-4.0
13.	Taijuan Walker	Tribe	-3.0
	Vince Velasquez	Skipjacks	-3.0
	Zach Davies	Redbirds	-3.0
	David Price	Redbirds	-3.0
	Griffin Canning	Wahoos	-3.0
18.	Matt Peacock	Redbirds	-2.0
19.	Chad Green	Tigers	-1.5
20.	Ryan Weathers	Bears	-1.0
	Shane McClellan	Skipjacks	-1.0

¹ Truly a "boomer."

	Mike Minor	Tigers	34.0
24.	Shohei Ohtani (P)	Skipjacks	33.0
	Martín Pérez	Blues	33.0

TOP 25 HITTERS

1.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	301.1
2.	Jesse "Tiddly" Winker	Bums	266.7
3.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Senators	261.3
4.	Marcus Semien	Monarchs	250.1
5.	Nick Castellanos	Cubs	249.9
6.	Kris Bryant	Tigers	244.6
7.	J.D. Martinez	Blues	242.2
8.	Max Muncy	Wahoos	238.7
9.	Rafael Devers	Saints	237.2
10.	Mark Canha	Bums	236.6
11.	Austin Meadows	Redbirds	235.7
12.	Xander "Humphrey" Bogaerts	Senators	232.3
13.	Shohei Ohtani (B)	Skipjacks	231.2
14.	Fernando Tatis Jr.	Bears	230.6
15.	Matt Olson	Monarchs	228.9
16.	Aaron (Here Come Da) Judge	Bombers	225.8
17.	Cedric Mullins	Bums	224.8
18.	Jared Walsh	Senators	219.6
19.	Carlos "Chick" Correa	Bombers	218.8
20.	Trea Turner	Bums	216.7
21.	Yuli "You Throw Like a" Gurriel	Bombers	216.7
22.	José Ramírez	Cubs	215.4
23.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	214.9
24.	Adam "Crane" Frazier	Tribe	214.2
25.	Bo Bichette	Skipjacks	213.8

(Sorry. It couldn't be helped. Call it Bermanania.)

WHO'S HOT - HITTING

1.	Patrick "Unconventional" Wisdom	Tribe	58.3
2.	Cedric "The Entertainer" Mullins	Bums	55.5
3.	Ryan "2-Point Dis" Mountcastle	BEARS	53.1
4.	Juan Soto	Redbirds	51.5
5.	Justin Upton	Redbirds	49.5
6.	Jonathan "Ice Cream" Schoop	Cubs	47.4

7.	Matt Olson	Monarchs	47.2
8.	Eric Haase	Skipjacks	47.0
9.	Austin Meadows	Redbirds	46.1
10.	Jose Altuve	Bums	45.2
11.	Andrew "Methuselah" McCutchen	Redbirds	43.5
12.	Jesse Winker	Bums	43.0
13.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	41.2
14.	Ronald "Matata" Acuña Jr.	Senators	41.0
15.	Jonathan "Pale Ale" India	Blues	39.8
16.	Andrew Benintendi	Redbirds	39.1
17.	Whit Merrifield	Tribe	37.6
18.	Carlos Correa	Bombers	36.8
19.	Dominic Smith	Bombers	36.7
20.	Josh Donaldson	Wahoos	36.4
21.	Ketel "Vodka Tonic" Marte	Redbirds	35.0
22.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	34.7
23.	Tony Kemp	Bombers	34.3
24.	Raimel Tapia	Saints	33.6
25.	Salvador Perez	Cubs	33.5

WHO'S NOT - HITTING

1.	Adam Duvall	Wahoos	-4.5
2.	David Peralta	Bums	-4.0
3.	Keston "I'm a What?" Hiura	Monarchs	-2.9
4.	Robbie "Hey, That's" Grossman	Wahoos	-2.5
5.	Jarred Kelenic	Blues	-2.5
6.	Seth Brown	Wahoos	-2.0
7.	Mike Zunino	Skipjacks	-1.2
8.	José Abreu	Cubs	-1.1
9.	Eric Hosmer	Bums	-1.0
10.	Niko "You're No" Goodrum	Senators	-0.9
11.	Yadier Molina	Wahoos	-0.9
12.	Rowdy "Howdy" Tellez	Wahoos	-0.5

SKIP SEZ



Kevin Gausman is overachieving for the Teutonic Trumpetfish in a Biblical way, having been drafted in the 9th round but now leading all pitchers by a healthy margin and being the top point producer in the league. If not for him, the **Saints** would be the "**Aints**."



The **Whinin' Wahoos** continue to mourn their hard luck this season even though they have Zack Wheeler and Jacob deGrom high up on the pitching leaderboard, and Max Muncy in the Top 25 of all hitters. PAwesome is clearly smarting from Carlos Martinez's recent -29.0 outing (yes, that hurts, a lot), but his real problem is with his anemic hitters. For week 9, he had five hitters with negative points for the week (Adam Duvall -4.5; Robbie Grossman -2.5; Seth Brown -2.0; Yadier Molina -0.9; and Rowdy Tellez at -0.5). This team needs some top-down changes, starting with management.



The top hitter for the week, Patrick Wisdom, posted 58.3 points for Week 9. How is it that everybody but the **Senators** seem to manage to find these pearls?

ALL THE WAY WITH LBJ

While in Ft. Worth last week for a deposition, I cajoled my brother Dan into road-tripping with me to Johnson City, Texas, for a look at LBJ's boyhood home, and then on west from there to take a gander at the LBJ ranch a/k/a *The Texas Whitehouse*. While our 3-1/2 hour-plus drive was a great time to catch up on things, unfortunately the anticipated *coup de grâce* of the trip--the Texas Whitehouse--was closed for repairs, and the road leading to it was flooded out that day.² So we could not even get a glimpse of the building itself (see below) and that was a bit of a disappointment. We did get to see LBJ's very modest boyhood home, as well as the Johnson Family Cemetery where he and Lady Bird are buried, and we were able to get up close and personal with some of the enormous Meat on the Hoof which roamed the Johnson ranch property, as depicted below.



LBJ's boyhood home

² As chronicled in one of the four LBJ books by Robert Caro, the Texas hill country where Johnson City is situated is notorious for flooding out during the spring rainy season, often washing away the topsoil and devastating the tillable land.



The Texas White House



Lyndon "First Base" Johnson behind the plate;
Tom Crider, a close friend, bats.

Lyndon in the Tools of Ignorance





Moouo-kie Betts?



Because of our truncated LBJ ranch visit, we took the opportunity to drive west to Fredericksburg and have lunch at one of their excellent German eateries, the Auslander Biergarten.



Nothing like a light lunch of wiener schnitzel, sauerkraut and hot German potato salad to perk a guy up for the rest of the day. No wonder Sgt. Schultz³ was always ready for a nap after feasting on one of Corporal LeBeau's tasty schnitzel plates.



When we were in Fredericksburg last Thursday, it was absolutely packed full of tourists, which at first I thought odd, it being an early afternoon on a Thursday in early June. Upon reflection, I think it is unmistakable evidence of just how excited people are to get out and do things

³ This fine actor, John Banner, who was born in Vienna on January 28, 1910, was actually Jewish, and forced to flee from his homeland. Long before he became the beloved Sgt. Schultz, Banner had a surprisingly fruitful acting career in the movies, usually playing, ironically, the part of a German Nazi. For example, in 1942 he played the part of German Captain Von Kleinoch in *Once Upon a Honeymoon*; that same year, he played the part of Fritz Weinermann in *Seven Miles from Alcatraz*; in 1943, he played an unnamed Gestapo agent in *Chetniks! The Fighting Guerrillas*; later in 1943, he played the part of "Kurz" in *Tonight We Raid Calais*; that same year, he played the part of an unnamed Gestapo agent in *They Came to Blow Up America*; in 1946, he played the part of a Nazi henchman named **Ernst** in *Rendezvous 24*; in 1956, he played the part of Oskar the Baker in *Never Say Goodbye*; in 1961, he played the part of Rudolph Hoss in *Operation Eichmann*; and in perhaps his finest role ever, in 1961, Banner played the voice of **Krause the Haberdasher** in the unforgettable *One, Two, Three*.

after 15 months in lockdown. In any event, if you are ever in the vicinity, I recommend a side junket to Fredericksburg, which is admittedly a tourist trap, but a nice place to visit.

THE VISIT TO DR. PEPPER BALLPARK



After shaking off our comatose condition following our hearty German lunch, Dan and I returned to the Dallas-Ft. Worth metroplex and took in a minor league baseball game at the Frisco, Texas facility formerly known as the Dr. Pepper Ballpark.⁴ In this nifty little bandbox that is shoehorned in amongst a surfeit of retail and residential outlets which surround it, we saw the hometown Frisco RoughRiders take on the visiting Amarillo Sod Poodles. A **bully** night for a little bit of AA baseball and another minor league baseball venue notched on the belt.

⁴ For an interesting story about the naming rights to the ballpark and what has happened to them, see: *The Sad Story of the Stadium Named Dr Pepper for No Good Reason*: [Dr. Pepper](#).

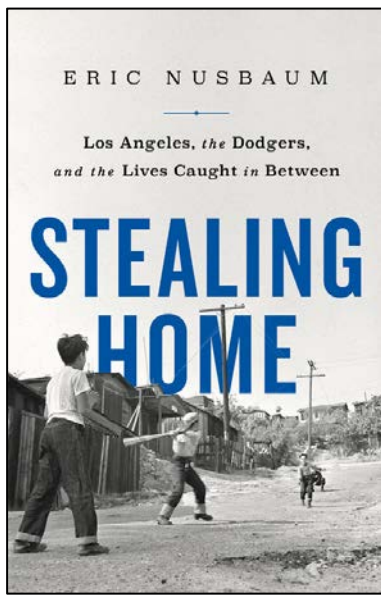


While spending time together on this Thursday boondoggle, Dan and I reminisced about the computer program that he wrote for us back in the early days of the Hot Stove League, which, as many of you will remember, led to Underbelly purchasing the USA Today newspaper every Wednesday and Thursday (or maybe it was every Tuesday and Wednesday, no matter), and keystroking in the weekly statistics of every player on every team, which allowed Dan's program to then spit out the composite numbers for each team. Then, as now, we were at the leading edge of rotisserie baseball technology. I am thinking of putting Dan on the **Senators'** staff as our very own Sabermetrician.⁵ As for Underbelly, we really ought to think about giving him a spot on The Cup for his yeoman service as the league scorekeeper in those early seasons, whether or not he ever enters the pantheon of HSL champions.

BOOK REPORT: ***Stealing Home***

I recently finished up an enjoyable read called *Stealing Home*, by Eric Nusbaum, a book that was generously gifted to me by Itchie when we were down in Phoenix to celebrate Emily's graduation from Grand Canyon University. The subject of the book is the means and methods of acquiring the land upon which Dodger Stadium was built in Chavez Ravine, as part of the corrupt bargain with Walter O'Malley to move the Dodgers from Brooklyn to Los Angeles in 1958.

⁵ However, after the old Skipper has sailed the Seven Seas for the final time, this could lead to a bloody family battle for control of the **Senators'** franchise, so perhaps I had better rethink this.



As the story goes, the area known as Palo Verde was developed by hard-working Mexicans who occupied the area in the early 1900s, and through whom the toil of their labors, turned it into a thriving community where they could live the American dream. However, when Los Angeles was grappling with the issue of providing affordable housing to its many homeless residents, a decision was made to install high-rise public housing in Palo Verde, invoking the use of eminent domain to purchase the land needed for the project from the Mexican Nationals who resided in the area. However, in a very convoluted political struggle, the Los Angeles City Council changed its mind and scrapped the plan to put low-income housing in the area. Instead, they somehow managed to use these same powers of eminent domain to purchase the property from the Mexicans who lived there to give Mr. O'Malley the land he needed for his amazing, first-of-its-kind modern major league ballpark. Hence, "*Stealing Home*" argues that their properties were stolen from them.

Having now read this book, I am pining to return to Dodger Stadium for a fresh look through a new set of lenses at what is now the third oldest major league baseball stadium which, when it opened in 1958, was considered a marvel of architecture and construction.

So there you have it.

THE TRIP

Is anyone interested in reviving our past practice of taking a league trip this year? How about a return junket to Arlington to see the new ballpark there the weekend of August 13-15, when the Oakland A's are in town? How about a show of hands for everyone who would be ready, willing and able to participate in such a junket. But not all at once, please.

SKIP'S PIX 'N' PANZ - Part 4

Sorry, ran out of time--and Linda says the deadline to go to press has passed. Next issue, I promise!

Skip