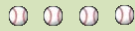


# NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE



SEASON XXXVII



2020 HSL Champion  
West Des Moines Cubs  
Manager: Shamu

400

## FROM THE BULLPEN

2021 Campaign

Edition No. 13

July 2, 2021

### BUMS BATTLE ON

Boys:

Through twelve weeks of Hot Stove League competition, Curby and his **Battlin' Bums** continue to lay siege to the competition, finishing at the top of the standings for the twelfth week in a row, this time with a 118.5-point bulge over the Ain't-Got-No-Quit-in-Them **Bombers**. Here are the full standings for the season and the Week 12 totals, followed by the individual player totals and the customary Who's Hot and Who's Not lists.

#### HSL STANDINGS THRU WEEK 12 ENDING JUNE 27, 2021

Rank	Team	Points	Pts Back
1	Bums	6198.4	-
2	Bombers	6079.9	118.5
3	Saints	5860.1	338.3
4	Cubs	5774.1	424.3
5	Skipjacks	5724.9	473.5
6	Redbirds	5681.0	517.4
7	Tribe	5640.1	558.3
8	Wahoos	5540.6	657.8
9	Monarchs	5349.3	849.1
10	Senators	5344.0	854.4
11	Bears	5328.6	869.8
12	Tigers	5245.2	953.2
13	Blues	5028.2	1170.2

#### POINT TOTALS FOR WEEK 12

Rank	Team	Points
1	Cubs	501.5
2	Bombers	486.9
3	Blues	479.4
4	Monarchs	476.2
5	Tribe	465.7
6	Skipjacks	465.0
7	Redbirds	454.8
8	Bears	449.0
9	Wahoos	446.1
10	Senators	430.6
11	Saints	416.9
12	Bums	397.5
13	Tigers	387.1

### TOP 25 PITCHERS

1.	Kevin Gausman	Saints	428.0
2.	Zack Wheeler	Wahoos	405.0
	Jacob deGrom	Wahoos	405.0
4.	Gerrit Cole	Bums	404.0
5.	Brandon Woodruff	Redbirds	397.0
6.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	391.0
7.	Yu Darvish	Blues	375.0
8.	Walker Buehler	Skipjacks	373.0
9.	Clayton Kershaw	Senators	370.0
10.	Max Scherzer	Tigers	366.0
11.	Freddy Peralta	Senators	352.0
12.	Chris Bassitt	Tribe	345.0
13.	Kyle Gibson	Monarchs	338.0
14.	Shane Bieber	Bombers	330.0
15.	Trevor Rogers	Bums	329.0
16.	Carlos Rodón	Bums	326.0
17.	Sandy Alcántara	Wahoos	311.0
	Julio Urías	Tigers	311.0
19.	Anthony DeSclafani	Bombers	310.0
20.	Aaron Civale	Monarchs	309.0
21.	Joe Musgrove	Bums	306.0
22.	Lance Lynn	Bums	301.0
23.	Sean Manaea	Skipjacks	300.0
24.	Zack Greinke	Senators	295.0
25.	Pablo López	Redbirds	294.0

### WHO'S HOT - PITCHING

1.	Merrill Kelly	Tigers	62.0
2.	Yu Darvish	Blues	60.0
3.	Clayton Kershaw	Senators	59.0
4.	Kyle Gibson	Monarchs	56.0
5.	Max Scherzer	Tigers	53.0
6.	Cole Irvin	Senators	52.0
7.	Jake Odorizzi	Bears	48.0
	Jacob deGrom	Wahoos	48.0
9.	Eduardo Rodriguez	Cubs	46.0
10.	Ian Anderson	Blues	43.0
11.	Charlie Morton	Cubs	42.0
	Ross Stripling	Saints	42.0
13.	Jordan Lyles	Cubs	41.0
	Tarik Skubal	Saints	41.0
15.	Germán Márquez	Tigers	40.0
16.	Anthony DeSclafani	Bombers	38.0
17.	Kyle Muller	Saints	37.0

### WHO'S NOT - PITCHING

1.	Mike Minor	Tigers	-16.0
	Jon Lester	Senators	-16.0
3.	Garrett Richards	Bears	-13.0
4.	Johan Oviedo	Monarchs	-12.0
	Sam Hentges	Bombers	-12.0
6.	Keegan Akin	Bombers	-11.0
7.	Chris Paddack	Saints	-9.0
8.	Dinelson Lamet	Bears	-8.0
9.	Cody Poteet	Senators	-7.0
10.	Alex Cobb	Senators	-6.0
11.	Brad Keller	Monarchs	-5.0
12.	Michael Fulmer	Tribe	-4.0
	Erick Fedde	Blues	-4.0
14.	Cal Quantrill	Monarchs	-2.0
15.	Marcus Stroman	Bombers	-1.0
	Adbert Alzolay	Bombers	-1.0

18.	Freddy Peralta	Senators	36.0
	José Urquidy	Redbirds	36.0
	Joe Ross	Wahoos	36.0
	Brandon Woodruff	Redbirds	36.0
22.	Zack Wheeler	Wahoos	34.0
	Johnny Cueto	Cubs	34.0
24.	Nick Pivetta	Skipjacks	33.0
	Nathan Eovaldi	Bombers	33.0

#### TOP 25 HITTERS

1.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	421.2
2.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Senators	350.4
3.	Shohei Ohtani	Skipjacks	349.2
4.	Fernando Tatis Jr.	Bears	335.2
5.	Carlos Correa	Bombers	331.6
6.	Marcus Semien	Monarchs	326.7
7.	Matt Olson	Monarchs	325.4
8.	Rafael Devers	Saints	321.5
9.	Jesse Winker	Bums	320.2
10.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	317.6
11.	Nick Castellanos	Cubs	315.5
12.	Bo Bichette	Skipjacks	308.3
13.	Jose Altuve	Bums	306.7
14.	J.D. Martinez	Blues	296.2
15.	Bryan Reynolds	Bears	292.7
16.	Cedric Mullins	Bums	291.9
17.	Adam Frazier	Tribe	288.7
18.	Yuli Gurriel	Bombers	284.9
19.	Trea Turner	Bums	284.6
20.	Jared Walsh	Senators	282.7
21.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	282.4
22.	Freddie Freeman	Monarchs	281.6
23.	Aaron Judge	Bombers	279.3
24.	Jake Cronenworth	Skipjacks	279.1
25.	Mark Canha	Bums	278.2

#### WHO'S HOT - HITTING

1.	Jake Cronenworth	Skipjacks	51.1
2.	Yordan Alvarez	Tribe	45.5
3.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	44.2
4.	Fernando Tatis Jr.	Bears	44.1
5.	Joey Gallo	Skipjacks	44.0
6.	Adam Frazier	Tribe	43.4
7.	Adolis García	Bombers	42.0
8.	Kyle Schwarber	Wahoos	41.5

#### WHO'S NOT - HITTING

1.	Trey Mancini	Saints	-5.5
2.	Garrett Hampson	Blues	-4.4
	Isiah Kiner-Falefa	Redbirds	-4.4
4.	Bobby Dalbec	Wahoos	-3.9
5.	Salvador Perez	Cubs	-3.6
6.	J.T. Realmuto	Tigers	-3.5
7.	Taylor Walls	Redbirds	-2.2
8.	Justin Upton	Redbirds	-1.0

9.	DJ LeMahieu	Tigers	38.1
10.	Shohei Ohtani	Skipjacks	34.0
11.	Carlos Correa	Bombers	33.8
12.	Nate Lowe	Bombers	33.6
13.	Myles Straw	Skipjacks	33.5
14.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	33.2
15.	Bryan Reynolds	Bears	32.5
16.	Aaron Judge	Bombers	32.0
17.	Rafael Devers	Saints	31.7
18.	Yuli Gurriel	Bombers	31.1
19.	Matt Chapman	Monarchs	30.0
20.	Yasmani Grandal	Monarchs	29.5
21.	Hunter Renfroe	Wahoos	29.3
22.	Eduardo Escobar	Cubs	28.9
	Kolten Wong	Skipjacks	28.9
24.	Ke'Bryan Hayes	Tribe	28.7
	Manny Machado	Bums	28.7

9.	Odúbel Herrera	Bears	-0.4
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### SKIP SEZ



Wait a minute, when did Tirebiter pick up this Pablo López guy who is now in the top 25 of all pitchers in the league? When is it my turn to land one of these blind pig acorn picks?



The 13th hottest pitcher last week was the **Saints'** Tarik Skuval. I guess we have lifted the ban on Muslim players in this league?



The **Bombers** managed to pick up valuable ground on the **Bums** this week even though they had four pitchers on the "Who's Not" list, including Sam Hentges at -12, Keegan Akin at -11, Marcus Stroman at -1, and Adbert Alzolay at -1. I guess Mouse hasn't heard that old adage about playing with fire.



The **Skipjacks'** Shohei Otani is now the third best hitter in the league with 349.2 points, passing up Fernando Tatis, Jr. The guy is an absolute stud. If he doesn't get hurt during the second half of the season, Otani has to be the odds-on favorite for America League MVP. We are witnessing an epic season from this impossibly-talented player.



Not only did Itchie have the hottest hitter of the week with Jake Cronenworth (51.1 points), but he also had Joey Gallo record the fifth highest weekly total (44.0), Shohei Otani with the 10th highest total (34.0), some cat named Myles Straw with the 13th highest total (33.5), and Kolten Wong with the 22nd highest total (28.9) of hitting points for the week. And yet the **Skipjacks** only had the sixth highest team total for the week with 465.0 points. It's all about the pitching, baby.

## SWELL IN THE WELL

After a twenty-month hiatus occasioned by the pandemic, last week I had my first jury trial since October 2019. Dang, it was swell to be back in the *well*. For the well of the courtroom is my very favorite place to be during any work-week, although an in-person deposition of an expert in Boston or San Francisco or Seattle or New York City or Philadelphia is not something that you will ever hear me complain about.

But it is the well--where trial lawyers live during voir dire and opening statements and direct examination and cross-examination and, best of all, closing arguments--that is my happy place. For it is in the well that we get to ply our trade, practice our craft, match wits with our opposing counsel, do our best *Eddie Haskell* impersonation for the judge, and most of all, and best of all, where we try to persuade twelve men and women of very different shapes, sizes, colors and backgrounds of the righteousness of our client's cause. Making that pitch to a captive audience of twelve--especially when you can tell from their body language that they are buying what you are selling--is one of the most glorious experiences imaginable.

My trial last week was in West Point, Cuming County, Nebraska, a community of a little over 3,000 people, and a place where the air smells like cow manure 24/7. The scent of *money*, as many like to say. A community of farmers and farm workers and farm families, hard-working people who are the salt of the earth. And a perfect audience when defending a phony-baloney trip-and-fall case against their beloved local hospital.

So this was a good case to ease a rusty old trial lawyer back into the courtroom, a two-day jury trial which was almost a lock for a defense verdict for my client, a case that even Hamilton Burger<sup>1</sup> couldn't have lost.<sup>2</sup> Even so, as I left our house on Wednesday morning for the first day of trial in West Point and HQ asked me how I was feeling, I told her, "I just hope I remember how to do this!" As it turns out, I *did* remember, but there was plenty of rust which had to be shaken off.

In the end, I'm not sure I knew how much I missed being in the well, because during the pandemic, it was kind of like everything was put on hold in my work world. All of the pressure and all of the urgency was gone, and it was just pretty darned easy masquerading as a trial lawyer while the courtrooms were shut down. But *easy* doesn't necessarily equal *good*, and



<sup>1</sup> The prosecuting attorney in every *Perry Mason* episode that I can ever remember watching, and the losing attorney in virtually any case he tried against the switch-hitting♠ Raymond Burr, even though in real life most prosecutors have about a 98% winning percentage, because if they can't win, they don't prosecute.

♠Men and boys.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, in this business, not unlike Husker football, you have to win the cases you're supposed to win, or your career will be short-lived.

spending 95% of my time reading and answering emails was most definitely not the reason I went to law school.<sup>3</sup>

Good gosh, it was swell to be back in the well.

### MY THREE SONS

On Wednesday night, HQ and Will and I drove down to the Star City for dinner with the Krause clan, and had the great good fortune to see and catch up with all of the Krause heirs except for Anna, who was out of town and unavailable, including Sam who was in town from Philadelphia. Turns out that Sam has joined the booming Krause family business (TECHMASTERS) as Chief-Strategist-in-Training<sup>4</sup> and General Counsel, joining forces with Jesse, Eli and the Old Man. A formidable foursome. Rumor has it that this thriving operation will one day be named *My Three Sons*, if and when the copyright and trademark issues can be resolved. Rumor also has it that Itchie has offered to move to the family compound to serve in the avuncular role as the stern but lovable, often befuddled, always inebriated, Uncle Charlie. Pitch perfect.

While at this august gathering at Krause Manor, I was thrilled to learn that B.T. has disinterred the Blue Nun/Red Cardinal Baseball Card and Sports Memorabilia, Inc. stash consisting of three mint Robbie Alomar rookie cards, the coveted seven-piece Jeffrey "Penitentiary Face" Leonard bobblehead doll collection, and a dog-eared Pete Rose photograph in his floppy hair and sideburns look, autographed by Fay Vincent's nephew; and the crème de la crème of the Blue Nun/Red Cardinal portfolio--something that would make Barry Halper salivate in his cremation urn somewhere--the perfectly-preserved<sup>5</sup> tranche of 9,999<sup>6</sup> Hensley Meulens rookie cards.

Imagine my excitement at learning the news about the locating of our seemingly long-lost retirement portfolio, something I figured B.T. had been selling off discretely over time and using the proceeds to finance the twelve renovations and additions to the Krause Compound; not to mention manifold tuition-making payments at UNL, Creighton, Notre Dame and Georgetown; not to mention providing seed money and overdraft protection for multiple shoe emporiums, ArtFX, the predecessor of *My Three Sons*, and other of B.T.'s capitalistic ventures; not to mention financing Husker football tickets, Champions Club downstroke and maintenance fees, and the suite at Pinnacle Bank; not to mention the purchase of the Mercedes Sewage Processor on Wheels.

Although we did not have time to calculate the value of our portfolio that night--catching up with the kinfolk was the priority of the evening--once home in Omaha I clicked on my computer browser and quickly found a current issue of *Beckett* online, and doing a little bit of rough math, learned that the entire collection is now worth just a smidge short of \$1100. Since we each invested \$500 in this venture back in 1988, our rate of return in 23 years, not

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<sup>3</sup> Speaking metaphorically, of course. When this old dinosaur went to law school, emails were not even a figment of Al Gore's imagination, nor was the internet, nor were desktop computers, nor were fax machines, nor were cell-phones. Those were the days of typewriters, carbon copies, white out, envelopes, 15-cent stamps, and postal workers who wore shorts and pushed little carts. Ahh, those were the days.

<sup>4</sup> Learning at the feet of the Master, of course, the wily, visionary Teutonic Trumpetfish.

<sup>5</sup> B.T. was so convincing that the \$2,000 lead-lined baseball card locker was a necessity and, well, I have just always trusted his impeccable business judgment.

<sup>6</sup> According to B.T.'s research, when you buy fewer than 10,000 of these cards, it's not reportable to the IRS.

counting the expense of the lead-lined vault, is about 1/10 of 1% per annum. I always knew that B.T. was a stable genius, and nobody knows the *Art of the Deal* like him.

Oh, well, you win some, you lose some, and it was found money anyway. No hard feelings, Blue Nun. But I do want to know one thing: Whatever happened to those ten pristine Mickey Mantle rookie cards that I advocated purchasing for our portfolio?

### OH SNAP: BASEBALL BLISS IN BELOIT



With nothing on my work calendar for yesterday and nothing today until late afternoon, I called an audible from my earlier plan to visit a few more rural Nebraska courthouses this week and instead made a solo drive to Beloit, Wisconsin to see the High-A Central League Beloit Snappers take on the Appleton Timber Rattlers at soon-to-be-shuttered Harry Pohlman Field. If I do say so myself, it was a brilliant decision.

Let me explain how it came about.

With no out-of-state work trips on the calendar for July or August, and hence no minor league ballpark boondoggles to look forward to, I fired up the old internet browser earlier this week and did a little searching for a possible Midwest junket. What I discovered was that the Beloit Snappers--which were already on my Bucket List--were moving into a brand spanking new ballpark on August 3, which quite naturally led to my realization that if I didn't act with dispatch, I would forever be deprived of seeing a game in their current ballpark, the venerable Harry Pohlman field. As fate would have it, the Snappers were in the midst of a home stand against their intrastate rival, the Timber Rattlers. So with HQ's cheerful blessing,<sup>7</sup> I was on the road Thursday morning for Beloit, an easy 450-mile jaunt.

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<sup>7</sup> And no doubt a thought bubble that went something like, "What is wrong with this guy?" and/or "You can't fix stupid."





**POHLMAN FIELD**

# SINGLE GAME TICKETS

\* POHLMAN FIELD PRICES ONLY

	SUN-THUR	FRI-SAT
HOME PLATE BOX	\$14	\$16
BOX	\$12	\$14
RESERVED	\$10	\$12
GENERAL ADMISSION	\$8 EVERYDAY	

\$2.00 ADDED ON DAY OF GAME  
EXCLUDES GENERAL ADMISSION

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SEASON TICKETS, GROUP OUTINGS AND PARTY DECKS  
CALL OUR FRONT OFFICE 608.362.2272

MAY 4-9	MAY 11-16	MAY 18-23	MAY 25-30	JUNE 1-6	JUNE 8-13	JUNE 15-20
JUNE 22-27	JUNE 29 - JULY 4	JULY 6-11	JULY 13-18	JULY 20-25	JULY 27- AUGUST 1	AUGUST 3-8
AUGUST 10-15	AUGUST 17-22	AUGUST 24-29	AUG 31- SEPT 5	SEPT 7-12	SEPT 14-19	HOME ROAD

**2021 SCHEDULE**

TUESDAY - SATURDAY 6:35 CT  
SUNDAY - 2:05 CT

WISCONSIN TIMBER RATTLERS BREWERS | SOUTH BEND CUBS | CEDAR RAPIDS KERNELS | PEORIA CHIEFS CAPTAINS | QUAD CITIES RIVER BANDITS ROYALS | LAKE COUNTY CAPTAINS INDIANS | **2021 Snappers FAREWELL SEASON** | **BELOIT SNAPPER MARLINS**

Once in Beloit, I quickly located suitable lodging, checked in, got my bearings, and headed over to the Harry C. Pohlman Field. One look at this small and aged facility and one can see why the team and its fan base is looking forward to moving into ABC Supply Stadium, which is located just adjacent to Beloit's beautiful "Main Street" downtown area. First of all, Pohlman Field looks to hold only about 2,000 or 3,000 people or so, and it doesn't even compare with the Legion baseball park in Elkhorn (Ta-Ha-Zouka Park) where Joe and Will formerly played. The players from both teams use the same bathrooms as the fans at Pohlman Field, something I don't believe I have seen before in any minor league ballpark.

Notwithstanding the spartan appearance and lack of fan accoutrements at Pohlman Field, it was a beautiful night for a baseball game, and a great night to people watch and listen amidst the undeniably Cheesehead crowd. A few of the highlights:



During the singing of the National Anthem by a local couple, the audio went out twice, rendering it one of the most awkward National Anthem performances to which I have been witness.



The bratwurst sandwiches at the ballpark were to die for. Duh. I was in Wisconsin, right?



The head of concessions at Pohlman Field knows his audience: twofers on Busch Lite Tallboys.



Even better, Spotted Cow<sup>8</sup> draft beer on tap.



The play-by-play announcer played the Snapper fans like a fiddle, enticing them to lustily chant, "Oh SNAP!" with every Snapper pitcher strikeout and every Snapper hitter hit.



The Snapper Cheesehead fans are loud. One ol' boy who held court all night sounded like he had been cast in the movie *Fargo*, and shared with all of us in the stands several stories which were excruciatingly detailed and seemingly interminable.<sup>9</sup> There were six Cheesehead dudes (see picture below) who were on some sort of baseball road trip, whose appearances I can only describe as "Misfits." Would love to have been the fly on the window of their rental van as they made their way to the next destination.



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<sup>8</sup> My son Joe Ernst's favorite ale.

<sup>9</sup> In other words, Big Guy-worthy.



The Snappers are the High-A affiliate of the Miami Marlins. Their cleanup hitter last night was the son of "Mr. Marlin," Jeff Conine, a good-looking lefty hitter named Griffin Conine. To the delight of the home crowd, Griffin stroked a 3-run homer in the bottom of the 8th to give the Snappers a 4-2 lead.



Perhaps the highlight of the evening for the Snappers crowd was the passing out of "Fishing Snappy" bobblehead dolls. If you were lucky enough to get a coupon for one while walking in (I was), then you merely had to line up behind the ballpark third base line during the bottom half of the 6th inning to claim your bobblehead doll. The line was about three blocks long, but I got mine, by golly. I will forever treasure it.



## BUT WHAT ABOUT BELOIT, ITSELF, SKIPPER?

I thought you'd never ask. Beloit is a charming little community of about 35,000 people, located just north of the Illinois border. Platted in 1838, it was planned to have wide streets, building on the New England model. The original name was New Albany, after Albany, Vermont. The name was changed to Beloit in 1838, supposedly to be reminiscent of *Detroit*.

Beloit allegedly claims to have invented not only the speedometer, but also Korn Kurls, supposedly the original puffed cheese snack, later surpassed in fame by Cheetos.

Notable Beloitians include: Former Major League baseball player Patsy Gharrity; Jonathan Harr, author of *A Civil Action*; Tommy Mills, former head coach of the Creighton Blue Jays football team; Zip Zabel, former Major League baseball player, and before that, a student-athlete at Kansas University and Baker University in Lawrence, Kansas; and finally, Danica Patrick of Indy and NASCAR auto racing fame.

## THE TRIP

The trip to Arlington, Texas, on August 13-15 is officially a go. We have solid yeses from Shamu, Big Guy, Itchie and Skipper; we have a *probably* from the Teutonic Trumpetfish; we have a *maybe* from Sunny; we have *can't make its* from Mouse, PAwesome and Tirebiter; and we have *haven't heard a peep* from Screech, SloPay, Tricko and Underbelly.

Details coming soon.

## AND FINALLY

Time to close out this issue of *From the Bullpen*. Here's hoping you have a safe, sound and stupendous Independence Day holiday weekend!

Skipper



Happy  
4<sup>th</sup> of July