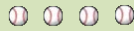


NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE



SEASON XXXVII



2020 HSL Champion
West Des Moines Cubs
Manager: Shamu

400

FROM THE BULLPEN

2021 Campaign

Edition No. 9

May 21, 2021

Gentlemen:

WEEK 6: BUMS BURNISH LEAGUE

The first-place **Bums** continue to outclass the competition during this 2021 Hot Stove League season, notching an eye-popping total of 579.9 points during the sixth week of play to extend their lead over the second-place **Aints** to 205.5 points. Riding the arms of first-place pitcher and top overall player Gerrit Cole (260.0), Trevor Rogers (181.0) and Carlos Rodón (167.0), as well as the red-hot Alex Wood (58.0 points for the week), and with high-octane every-day players Trea Turner (155.8) and Jesse Winker (150.0), it looks like the **Bums** will be hard to catch.

Here are the standings, from top to bottom, for Week 6.

Rank	Team	Points	Pts Back
1	Bums	3319.9	-
2	Saints	3114.4	205.5
3	Skipjacks	3029.2	290.7
4	Cubs	2975.1	344.8
5	Tribe	2972.2	347.7
6	Bombers	2904.6	415.3
7	Tigers	2852.1	467.8
8	Redbirds	2816.4	503.5
9	Senators	2798.4	521.5
10	Wahoos	2774.0	545.9
11	Monarchs	2747.2	572.7
12	Bears	2697.5	622.4
13	Blues	2437.9	882.0

The second-hottest team for the week was the **Tribe**, with 516.8 points, vaulting Ubelly into 5th place, followed by the **Bombers** with 513.8 points, advancing them into 6th place.

At the other end of the spectrum were the **Monarchs**, who posted a lame 340.3 points for the week to drop to 11th, and the bottom-dwelling **Blues**, who had the second-lowest total for the week with 413 points, wedging them deeper into the bowels of the league.

Here are the point totals for Week 6 for all 13 teams:

Rank	Team	Points
1	Bums	579.9
2	Tribe	516.8
3	Bombers	513.8
4	Redbirds	466.5
5	Senators	466.3
6	Tigers	457.1
7	Wahoos	450.7
8	Saints	441.7
9	Skipjacks	424.6
10	Bears	423.5
11	Cubs	414.8
12	Blues	413.0
13	Monarchs	340.3

TOP 25 PITCHERS

1.	Gerrit Cole	Bums	260.0
2.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	246.0
3.	Tyler Glasnow	Bears	241.0
4.	John Means	Cubs	228.0
5.	Shane Bieber	Bombers	225.0
6.	Kevin Gausman	Saints	222.0
7.	Brandon Woodruff	Redbirds	214.0
8.	Max Scherzer	Tigers	208.0
9.	Jack Flaherty	Monarchs	204.0
10.	Kyle Gibson	Monarchs	199.0
	Jacob deGrom	Wahoos	199.0
12.	Freddy Peralta	Senators	197.0
13.	Yu Darvish	Blues	190.0
14.	Clayton Kershaw	Senators	188.0
15.	Trevor Rogers	Bums	181.0

	Julio Urias	Tigers	181.0
17.	Zack Wheeler	Wahoos	179.0
18.	Aaron Nola	Tribe	170.0
19.	Lance McCullers Jr.	Redbirds	169.0
20.	Anthony DeSclafani	Bombers	167.0
	Carlos Rodón	Bums	167.0
22.	Aaron Civale	Monarchs	163.0
	Chris Bassitt	Tribe	163.0
24.	Huascar Ynoa	Bears	159.0
25.	Corbin Burnes	Redbirds	158.0

WHO'S HOT - PITCHING

1.	Freddy Peralta	Senators	70.0
2.	Lance McCullers Jr.	Redbirds	62.0
3.	Alex Wood	Bums	58.0
4.	Luke Weaver	Wahoos	48.0
5.	Gerrit Cole	Bums	45.0
6.	Kyle Gibson	Monarchs	44.0
7.	Martín Pérez	Blues	43.0
8.	Robbie Ray	Tribe	42.0
	Tyler Mahle	Saints	42.0
	Chris Bassitt	Tribe	42.0
	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	42.0
12.	Madison Bumgarner	Senators	39.0
13.	Rich Hill	Bombers	36.0
	Erick Fedde	Blues	36.0
	Patrick Corbin	Tribe	36.0
	Kevin Gausman	Saints	36.0
17.	Josh Fleming	Redbirds	35.0
	Julio Urias	Tigers	35.0
	Mike Minor	Tigers	35.0
	Kyle Hendricks	Wahoos	35.0
21.	Brandon Woodruff	Redbirds	34.0
22.	Logan Webb	Bums	33.0
23.	Hyun Jin Ryu	Skipjacks	32.0
	Matthew Boyd	Senators	32.0
	Jordan Montgomery	Saints	32.0

WHO'S NOT - PITCHING

1.	Sandy Alcantara	Wahoos	-20.0
2.	Sean Manaea	Skipjacks	-19.0
3.	Wade Miley	Senators	-18.0
	J.A. Happ	Monarchs	-18.0
5.	Luis Castillo	Monarchs	-16.0
6.	Joe Ross	Senators	-12.0
7.	Dylan Bundy	Saints	-11.0
	Adam Wainwright	Monarchs	-11.0
9.	Matt Harvey	Tribe	-8.0
10.	Brett Anderson	Skipjacks	-7.0
11.	Dane Dunning	Skipjacks	-5.0
	Mitch Keller	Redbirds	-5.0
13.	Patrick Sandoval	Cubs	-4.0
	Huascar Ynoa	Bears	-4.0
15.	José Ureña	Cubs	-3.0
16.	Trevor Williams	Blues	-2.0
17.	Adrian Houser	Wahoos	-1.0
	Triston McKenzie	Tribe	-1.0
	Chase Anderson	Skipjacks	-1.0

TOP 25 HITTERS

1.	J.D. Martinez	Blues	200.7
2.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	195.4
3.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Senators	184.8
4.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	183.2
5.	Kris Bryant	Tigers	176.1
6.	Nick Castellanos	Cubs	171.4
7.	Rafael Devers	Saints	171.2
8.	Mitch Haniger	Tigers	165.5
9.	Max Muncy	Wahoos	165.2
10.	Mike Trout	Skipjacks	164.5
11.	Nolan Arenado	Tigers	163.7
12.	Yuli Gurriel	Bombers	162.7
13.	Shohei Ohtani (Batter)	Skipjacks	161.6
14.	Aaron Judge	Bombers	161.2
15.	Carlos Santana	Tigers	161.0
16.	Bo Bichette	Skipjacks	158.9
17.	Justin Turner	Wahoos	157.0
18.	Jared Walsh	Senators	156.6

19.	Trea Turner	Bums	155.8
20.	José Ramírez	Cubs	155.6
21.	Marcus Semien	Monarchs	152.8
	Ryan McMahon	Skipjacks	152.8
23.	Nick Solak	Saints	152.0
24.	Jesse Winker	Bums	150.0
25.	Chris Taylor	Saints	149.0

WHO'S HOT - HITTING

1.	Aaron Judge	Bombers	60.6
2.	Josh Fuentes	Tribe	48.4
3.	Kyle Tucker	Redbirds	47.0
4.	Max Muncy	Wahoos	43.1
5.	José Abreu	Cubs	42.9
6.	Mitch Haniger	Tigers	41.5
7.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	41.1
	Carlos Santana	Tigers	41.1
9.	Trea Turner	Bums	39.8
10.	Yonathan Daza	Cubs	38.5
11.	Jesús Aguilar	Cubs	38.2
12.	Nick Castellanos	Cubs	37.5
13.	Nolan Arenado	Tigers	36.5
14.	Adam Frazier	Tribe	36.3
15.	Teoscar Hernández	Bears	36.0
	Robbie Grossman	Wahoos	36.0
17.	Tim Anderson	Senators	35.9
18.	Jose Altuve	Bums	35.7
19.	Carlos Correa	Bombers	35.1
20.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	34.8
21.	Kyle Schwarber	Wahoos	33.6
22.	Manny Machado	Bums	33.2
23.	Ryan McMahon	Skipjacks	31.4
24.	Austin Nola	Bums	30.6
25.	Tyler O'Neill	Monarchs	30.5

WHO'S NOT - HITTING

1.	David Fletcher	Monarchs	-7.8
2.	Hunter Dozier	Senators	-6.7
3.	Tyrone Taylor	Monarchs	-3.0

4.	Gleyber Torres	Bombers	-2.6
5.	Nico Hoerner	Blues	-1.5
6.	Paul DeJong	Redbirds	-1.3
7.	Jed Lowrie	Wahoos	-1.1
8.	Eddie Rosario	Tigers	-1.0
	Corey Dickerson	Blues	-1.0
10.	Nick Madrigal	Blues	-0.8
11.	Wil Myers	Monarchs	-0.5
12.	Didi Gregorius	Tigers	-0.4
13.	James McCann	Bombers	-0.1

SKIP SEZ



Note that the top line scorers in the league are all pitchers, from Gerrit Cole to Jack Flaherty. It really is all about the pitching, isn't it?



I see that the **Bears** have a pitcher by the name of Huascar Ynoa, who is the 24th ranked pitcher with 159.0 points. I think that we should have a rule in this league that if you pick up a player, you have to be able to pronounce his name, and so I'm pretty sure that would disqualify SloPay.



Kudos to Stretch for picking up Martín Pérez and Erick Fedde, who scored 43.0 and 36.0 points, respectively, during Week 6.



Lamentations for me as the owner of Wade Miley, who followed up his no-hitter with a negative 18.0 moonwalk. He's no Johnny Vander Meer, is he?



Kudos to Mouse for owning Aaron Judge, the hottest hitter in the majors right now, who laid down the law to the tune of 60.6 points for Week 6.



Congrats to the **Tribe** for picking up the unknown (at least to me) Josh Fuentes, who posted 48.4 points for the week to pace the **Tribe**.

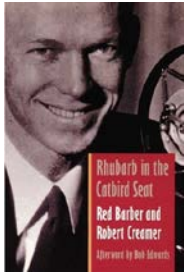


The sick and getting sicker **Monarchs** managed to have three hitters on the "Who's Not" hot list for the week, with David Fletcher at -7.8, Tyrone Taylor at -3.0 and Wil Myers at -0.5. Time for some soul-searching, Screech.



Right behind David Fletcher on the "Who's Not" list is my team's own Hunter Dozier, who managed a negative 6.7 points for the Week 6 games, which is about par for the course for him. He is stinking it up in a big way for both the Royals and the **Senators** and it will be a miracle if his batting average ever crosses the Mendoza line this year. He has already established himself as a **Senatorial never-ever**.

THE OL' REDHEAD



I just finished reading an entertaining book by Red Barber and Robert Creamer entitled *Rhubarb in the Catbird Seat*.¹ As many of you old-timers know, Barber was a long-time radio announcer for the Cincinnati Reds, where he worked for Larry MacPhail; for the Brooklyn Dodgers, when Branch Rickey was the general manager; and then for the New York Yankees, in the pre-Steinbrenner days. Here are a few interesting tidbits that I learned from the book, which is an easy and pleasant read:



Walter Lanier "Red" Barber was born on February 17, 1908, in Columbus, Mississippi and raised there and in Sanford, Florida. His deep southern roots and his self-admitted bigotry led him to initially decline the role of Brooklyn Dodgers announcer in 1948, when he found out that (gasp!) a black man by the name of Jackie Robinson was in the plans of Mr. Rickey. As he describes it in the book, Barber underwent a "deep self-examination" of who he was. He thought and thought and thought and thought about it, and essentially "willed" himself into acceptance of a black player as a major leaguer and a black man as an equal person. He became an ardent supporter of Robinson and many other black ballplayers.



In describing the roots of Branch Rickey's advocacy for black ballplayers, Barber talks about a lunch that he had with Branch Rickey at Joe's Restaurant in Brooklyn. He said that Rickey shared with him the story of how when he was the baseball coach at the University of Michigan,² while he was there getting his law degree, the best player of the team was a splendid young man who was a Negro from Upper Michigan. When he took his team down to South Bend, Indiana, to play a game, the clerk at the Oliver Hotel told Rickey, "We do not take Negroes here." As the story goes, Rickey convinced the clerk to allow his black player, the team catcher, to stay in his room. After registering the rest of the team, Mr. Rickey went up to the room and this young player was crying his eyes out and frantically pulling at his hands, saying, "It's my skin. If I could just tear it off, I'd be like everybody else. It's my skin. It's my skin, Mr. Rickey." This episode, as legend has it, is what motivated Rickey to sign Jackie Robinson and to use him to break the color barrier.



Barber was an excellent high school football player and athlete, and was recruited to play football at the University of Florida. However, after getting battered by bigger, better athletes in practice, he quickly decided that he was a student but not a student-athlete.

¹ Originally published in 1968 by Doubleday, reprinted by Bison Books, Afterword by Bob Edwards, University of Nebraska Press (1997).

² As I read this recounting of Barber's conversation with Rickey, something about it didn't ring true, and a quick Google search revealed that it was actually while Rickey was coaching at Ohio Wesleyan University that the incident with the black player occurred in South Bend, Indiana, in 1904, and the player, Charles Thomas, was from Zanesville, Ohio, and not from Upper Michigan. Apparently the fact-checkers at Doubleday missed that one.



While at Gainesville, Barber was a penniless college student who took about any job he could get during the Depression era, and one of them was working at the campus radio station. He was a natural behind the microphone, as he and the radio station manager quickly learned, and when he was offered a full-time broadcasting gig at the station, he dropped out of college and began his legendary career path.



Barber not only broadcast baseball games, he also announced basketball and football and other sports, including a famous college football game between what was at the time considered to be the best team, the Michigan Wolverines, against the Notre Dame Fighting Irish, which the Domers won on the last play of the game with a Hail Mary-ish pass and reception.



It was in Brooklyn that Barber's popularity soared, and he became an institution, beloved for his folksy, Southern gentleman style. Some of this favorite catch phrases included:

They're tearing up the pea patch.

Can of corn.

Rhubarb.

Sittin' in the catbird seat.

Walkin' in tall cotton.

Slicker than boiled okra.

Easy as a bank of fog.

Tighter than a new pair of shoes on a rainy day.



While Chris Berman and other Barber wannabes may have adopted the use of "Back, back, back" to describe a long fly ball, here was Barber's call during Game 6 of the 1947 World Series, with Joe DiMaggio at the plate:

"Here's the pitch, swung on, belted . . . it's a long one . . . back goes Gionfriddo, back, back, back, back, back, back . . . heee makes a one-handed catch against the bullpen! Oh, Doctor!"



While running CBS Sports, Barber became the mentor of another redheaded announcer who achieved legendary status. Barber recruited Fordham University graduate Vin Scully for CBS football coverage, and then eventually invited him into the Dodgers broadcast booth to succeed Ernie Harwell in 1950.



During his last year at the baseball mic in 1966, the Yankees finished 10th and last in the American League after forty years of dominance. On September 22 of that year, 413 people showed up in 65,000 seat Yankee Stadium. Barber reportedly asked the TV cameras to pan the empty stands as he commented on the pathetic attendance, which they refused to do. An undeterred Barber said, "I don't know what the paid attendance is today, but whatever it is, it is the smallest crowd in the history of Yankee Stadium, and this crowd is the story, not the game." A week later, team president Mike Burke told Barber that his contract would not be renewed at the end of the season.



After his dismissal by the Yankees, Barber retired from baseball broadcasting and wrote several books, but most notably became a weekly contributor to NPR's *Morning Edition* program. Every Friday morning, from his home in Tallahassee, Barber would talk with host Bob Edwards, mostly about sports, but also about many other topics. Barber died in 1992.

AND THEN THERE'S THIS

The DVD cover features a large image of a cheering crowd at the top. Below the crowd, the text "1997 Huskers" is written in a stylized red font. Underneath that, "NEBRASKA" is written in large, bold, red letters with a yellow outline. Below "NEBRASKA" is "vs." in a smaller font, followed by "MISSOURI" in large, bold, yellow letters with a black outline. Three smaller action shots from the football game are arranged in a collage below the team names. At the bottom of the cover, the text "1997 MIRACLE IN MISSOURI" is written in large, bold, yellow letters with a black outline, followed by "NEBRASKA 45 MISSOURI 38" in red and black. Below this, a smaller line of text reads "Entire game as filmed by Husker Vision complete with radio broadcast for audio." and a DVD Video logo is visible in the bottom right corner.

1997
Huskers
NEBRASKA
vs.
MISSOURI

1997 MIRACLE IN MISSOURI
NEBRASKA 45 MISSOURI 38

Entire game as filmed by Husker Vision
complete with radio broadcast for audio.

DVD
VIDEO

Yesterday while elipitcaling and channel-surfing, I lucked into a replay of the 1997 Husker-Missouri football game, wherein the Huskers tied the game on Matt Davison's miracle ricochet shot off of Shevin Wiggins' foot (the so-called "Flea Kicker") with time expiring. This was my first time rewatching this game since the original telecast on November 18, 1997. Here are a few observations:



Frost (7) goes airborne over Missouri's Caldrioff Easter (1) and Harold Piersey (2) to score the Huskers' first touchdown. Frost scored four touchdowns and rushed for 141 yards in NU's overtime win.

Scott Frost was as cool a customer as they come in the fourth quarter, managing the clock effectively and never once getting happy feet. And talk about tough, the guy ran the football like a brawling fullback, repeatedly crashing the line and fighting and clawing for every last yard. A true gamer, unlike pretty much every NU quarterback since.



Frost leaps over Missouri safety Harold Piersey to score the winning touchdown in overtime at Faurot Field in Columbia. The Huskers rallied with touchdowns on the last play of regulation and in overtime for the 45-38 victory

While Frost did not have a lot of touch on the ball, his passing accuracy was good, and he wasn't afraid to throw it to a tight window. As long as his receivers were ready for the arrival of a pig-skin bullet, they were good.



Nebraska's Niles Paul (24) and Menelik Holt (18) celebrate Paul's first fourth-quarter touchdown against Missouri on Thursday night.

The Tigers were 29-point underdogs for that game, but they certainly didn't look like it in that game. Corby Jones was one helluva an athlete, and as elusive as they come, repeatedly avoiding some of the best Husker defenders we have ever had (Grant Wistrom, Jason Peter, Chris Kelsay, Mike Rucker, Steve Warren, Jay Foreman, Carlos Polk, Eric Warfield, Ralph Brown, Mike Brown). I only caught the second half, but it was remarkable to me how hard our players were playing, both on offense and defense, and the battles in the trenches were brutal. To my way of thinking, it has been 23 years since our beloved Huskers have played their guts out like that. But with Frost at the helm, then and now, I have hope. Frost should show clips of that game to his team every Friday night during the football season.



The Miracle Catch

Lastly, while those Chowderheads from Michigan love to cluck about how we didn't deserve a share of the National Championship because of the miracle catch by Davison to salvage our undefeated season, the pass from Frost to Wiggins--which ricocheted off Wiggins and was then kicked by him and then caught by Davison--should have been caught in the first place by Wiggins. He was just over the goal line, and Frost's bullet pass was right in the breadbasket, so it wasn't such a miracle finish after all.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Baseball is a red-blooded sport for red-blooded men. It's no pink tea, and mollycoddles had better stay out. It's a contest and everything that implies, a struggle for supremacy, a survival of the fittest.

~Ty Cobb

And that's all for this edition of *From the Bullpen*. Good day.

Skipper