

# FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Newsletter of the

## NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE

2023: Our 39th Season

Edition No. 23



August 17, 2023

### OWNERS:

**Ted Bridges**  
("PAwesome")  
Wahoos  
Returning Champion

**Jeff Bechtolt**  
("Screech")  
Monarchs

**Jon Blongewicz**  
("Sunny")  
Blues

**Denny Bontrager**  
("SloPay")  
Bears

**Jim Buser**  
("Tirebiter")  
Redbirds

**Rick Drews**  
("Big Guy")  
Tigers

**Dave Ernst**  
("Skipper")  
Senators

**Bob Hurlbut**  
("Underbelly")  
Tribe

**Scott Krause**  
("BT")  
Saints

**Mike Morris**  
("Mouse")  
Bombers

**Mitch Pirnie**  
("Magpie/Tricko")  
Bums

**Chuck Sinclair**  
("Shamu")  
Cubs

**John Thielen**  
("Itchie")  
Skipjacks

### STAFF:

Publisher and Editor  
Dave Ernst

Webmaster and  
Assistant Editor  
Linda "Chief" Koftan

### A BUMS' RUSH

Brethren:

The story of Week 20 of the 2023 Hot Stove League campaign was the **Bums**, the hottest team of the second half of the season. Through last Sunday, the **Bums** had catapulted their way into 2nd place, and as of today, August 17, they now lead the pack over B.T. Squared (the monopolistic Baby Trumpetfish/Bridges Trust duo). Wow, didn't see that coming.

The **Bums** scored an eye-popping 645.0 points last week, the second highest weekly total this season behind the **Wahoos'** total of 651.2 points during Week 8.

The **Bums'** emergence breaks up the B.T. Squared stranglehold on the league which has been a source of dismay and nausea to all of the rest of us since Week 7 (ending May 14, 2023) and continuing on for just short of three months through Week 19 (ending August 6, 2023) when the **Wahoos** led the **Saints** by 23.2 points and the **Bums** were still 240.6 points back. Moreover, as recently as July 2, 2023, through Week 14, the **Bums** were a seemingly-insurmountable 656.8 points behind before their historic turnaround.

As we look backwards over the season, prior to this past week, the last team not named the **Saints** or the **Wahoos** to occupy one of the top two spots in the standings was the—wait for it—**Redbirds**, who on May 7, 2023, were in 2nd place and a mere 82.5 points behind the **Saints** before beginning their epic collapse into the cellar.

Without further ado, we provide the standings and point totals for Week 20:

	Team	Points	Pts Back
1	Saints	9408.2	-
2	Bums	9329.8	78.4
3	Wahoos	9310.8	97.4
4	Skipjacks	8667.0	741.2
5	Monarchs	8640.6	767.6



6	Cubs	8607.4	800.8
7	Bombers	8379.9	1028.3
8	Bears	8343.6	1064.6
9	Blues	8285.2	1123.0
10	Tribe	8190.4	1217.8
11	Senators	8179.4	1228.8
12	Tigers	7829.1	1579.1
13	Redbirds	7546.3	1861.9

	<b>Team</b>	<b>Pts</b>
1	Bums	645.0
2	Senators	570.4
3	Monarchs	512.6
4	Saints	506.0
5	Blues	494.1
6	Tribe	481.6
7	Cubs	436.7
8	Bombers	431.1
9	Redbirds	422.6
10	Skipjacks	414.9
11	Wahoos	385.4
12	Bears	366.8
13	Tigers	307.2

And now, per tradition, we provide the individual point totals and the season and weekly lead-boards:

### TOP 15 PITCHERS

	<b>Pitchers</b>	<b>Roster</b>	<b>Pts</b>
1.	Gerrit Cole	Bombers	561.0
2.	Spencer Strider	Tigers	538.0
3.	Zac Gallen	Bears	526.0
4.	Logan Webb	Tribe	506.0
5.	Kevin Gausman	Bombers	499.0
6.	Pablo López	Saints	488.0
7.	George Kirby	Blues	477.0
8.	Luis Castillo	Blues	470.0
9.	Shohei Ohtani	Redbirds	466.0
10.	Corbin Burnes	Senators	462.0
11.	Zack Wheeler	Cubs	452.0
12.	Framber Valdez	Wahoos	446.0
	Justin Steele	Monarchs	446.0
	Logan Gilbert	Bums	446.0
	Blake Snell	Skipjacks	446.0
16.	Zach Eflin	Redbirds	440.0



17.	Nathan Eovaldi	Wahoos	429.0
18.	Chris Bassitt	Senators	426.0
19.	Sonny Gray	Monarchs	414.0
20.	Mitch Keller	Saints	408.0
21.	Shane McClellan	Blues	406.0
22.	Jesús Luzardo	Saints	401.0
23.	Freddy Peralta	Cubs	400.0
24.	Max Scherzer	Senators	398.0
	Aaron Nola	Tigers	398.0

### WHO'S HOT – PITCHING

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Freddy Peralta	Cubs	74.0
2.	Pablo López	Saints	70.0
3.	Julio Urías	Saints	67.0
4.	Tanner Bibee	Bums	62.0
5.	Gavin Williams	Senators	58.0
6.	Brandon Williamson	Blues	57.0
7.	Sonny Gray	Monarchs	52.0
8.	Kodai Senga	Redbirds	50.0
9.	Dane Dunning	Skipjacks	48.0
10.	Logan Gilbert	Bums	45.0
	Logan Webb	Tribe	45.0
12.	Matthew Liberatore	Saints	42.0
	Dylan Cease	Monarchs	42.0
14.	Sandy Alcantara	Bums	41.0
	Michael Lorenzen	Bums	41.0
16.	Tony Gonsolin	Blues	39.0
	Jon Gray	Wahoos	39.0
18.	George Kirby	Blues	38.0
19.	Kevin Gausman	Bombars	36.0
20.	Hyun Jin Ryu	Senators	35.0
21.	Zac Gallen	Bears	34.0
	Reese Olson	Cubs	34.0
23.	Luis Castillo	Blues	33.0
	Max Scherzer	Senators	33.0
25.	Ranger Suárez	Cubs	30.0

### WHO'S NOT – PITCHING

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Reid Detmers	Bears	-19.0
2.	Jesús Luzardo	Saints	-14.0
	Kyle Gibson	Monarchs	-14.0
4.	Alex Cobb	Cubs	-9.0
5.	Jaime Barria	Tigers	-7.0
6.	José Berríos	Senators	-5.0

	Seth Lugo	Wahoos	-5.0
	Tyler Anderson	Wahoos	-5.0
9.	Drew Smyly	Tribe	-4.0
10.	Yonny Chirinos	Bombers	-3.0
11.	Johan Oviedo	Blues	-2.0
	MacKenzie Gore	Skipjacks	-2.0
13.	Tarik Skubal	Saints	-1.0

### TOP 25 HITTERS

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Cubs	627.7
2.	Shohei Ohtani	Skipjacks	618.3
3.	Freddie Freeman	Skipjacks	605.4
4.	Matt Olson	Wahoos	597.8
5.	Mookie Betts	Bombers	552.5
6.	Marcus Semien	Cubs	489.4
7.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	486.2
8.	Juan Soto	Saints	484.8
9.	Kyle Tucker	Monarchs	484.6
10.	Austin Riley	Saints	474.6
11.	Adolis García	Skipjacks	465.1
12.	Christian Yelich	Tigers	454.5
13.	Corbin Carroll	Bears	447.8
14.	Ketel Marte	Saints	438.8
15.	Francisco Lindor	Monarchs	436.6
16.	Bobby Witt Jr.	Bums	435.8
17.	Luis Robert Jr.	Blues	435.1
18.	Wander Franco	Blues	434.0
19.	José Ramírez	Tribe	432.6
20.	Pete Alonso	Bums	432.4
21.	Nathaniel Lowe	Bums	426.6
22.	Lane Thomas	Cubs	424.6
23.	Nolan Arenado	Bombers	423.3
24.	Yandy Díaz	Bums	420.4
25.	Christian Walker	Redbirds	419.4

### WHO'S HOT – HITTING

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Matt Olson	Wahoos	65.4
2.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	55.2
3.	Jose Altuve	Tribe	53.1
4.	Austin Riley	Saints	49.9
5.	Pete Alonso	Bums	49.8
6.	Kerry Carpenter	Wahoos	44.0
7.	Ke'Bryan Hayes	Senators	43.7
8.	Kyle Tucker	Monarchs	43.5







9.	Trea Turner	Blues	42.4
10.	Keibert Ruiz	Bums	42.2
11.	Carlos Correa	Bears	40.5
12.	Bryan Reynolds	Monarchs	38.0
	Wander Franco	Blues	38.0
14.	Nick Castellanos	Senators	37.5
15.	Zack Gelof	Bums	36.5
16.	Tommy Edman	Redbirds	35.9
17.	Aaron Judge	Wahoos	35.0
	MJ Melendez	Monarchs	35.0
19.	Josh Bell	Bombers	34.2
20.	Andrés Giménez	Bums	33.9
21.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Cubs	33.5
22.	Andruw Monasterio	Bears	33.3
23.	Mookie Betts	Bombers	33.2
24.	Spencer Torkelson	Tribe	31.1
	Whit Merrifield	Senators	31.1

### WHO'S NOT – HITTING

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Esteury Ruiz	Monarchs	-1.5
2.	Andy Ibáñez	Bombers	-1.4
3.	Mickey Moniak	Wahoos	-1.0
4.	Tyler Stephenson	Tribe	-0.9
5.	Jake McCarthy	Monarchs	-0.5
6.	Gunnar Henderson	Blues	-0.4

A little food for thought from these individual numbers:

-  The **Bums** are now leading the pack even though they only have one pitcher, Logan Gilbert (446.0) among the top 25 pitchers. Contrast this with the last place **Redbirds**, who have both #9 Shohei Ohtani (466.0) and #16 Zach Eflin (440.0) in the top 25 list; and the 12th place **Tigers** who have both #2 Spencer Strider (538.0) and #25 Aaron Nola (398.0) among the top 25 pitchers.
-  And I would be remiss if I didn't point out that the 11th place **Senators** have three pitchers in the top 25 with #10 Corbin Burnes (462.0), #18 Chris Bassitt (426.0) and #24 Max Scherzer (398.0). So I guess one has to say it's *not* really all about pitching.
-  The **Bums** did have four pitchers on the Who's Hot - Pitching list with #4 Tanner Bibee (62.0), #10 Logan Gilbert (45.0), #14 Sandy Alcantara (41.0) and #14 Michael Lorenzen (41.0), making headlines for the **Bums**. Remarkably, the **Bums** don't have a single hitter among the top 15 for the season, although they do have Bobby Witt Jr. at #16 with 435.8, Pete Alonso at #20 with 432.4 and Nathaniel Lowe at #21 with 426.6.
-  Even though the **Skipjacks** have three hitters among the top 25 with #2 Shohei Ohtani at 618.3, #3 Freddie Freeman at 605.4 and #11 Adolis García with 465.1, they are

woefully out of contention and in 4th place at 741.2 points behind the league-leading **Saints**, as of last Sunday.

📍 And what of the **Wahoos**, you ask? Even though they had the top hitter for the week, Matt Olson at 65.4 points, as well as #6 hitter Kerry Carpenter with 44.0 points, and #17 Aaron Judge at 35.0 points, for the week they only managed a measly 385.4 points, 11th best in the league for last week. So it's fair to say that the **Wahoos** have some pitching issues, it would seem.

### **THE MARRIAGE OF ABBEY AND JOE**

Thanks to all of you who made it to Joe and Abbey's wedding last Saturday night at the Holland Center, and/or to the reception at the Leo. The Hot Stove League was well-represented with eight Hot Stove Leaguers in attendance, and thanks to all of you who took the time to talk with Linda and express your gratitude for all that she does for us.

Below are two of the photos from the wedding, followed by the "Ode" to the happy couple that I "channeled" from my "rhyming poet" father, Jack Ernst, which I recited at the prenuptial on Friday night.



#### ***GREAT COUPLES***

#### **An Ode to Abbey and Joe**

Through the annals of time,  
There have been striking couples,  
Like Cleopatra, and Anthony, her beau.  
But right here in this city,  
If you're looking for pretty,  
Look no further than Abbey and Joe.

It goes far beyond looks,  
Which are only skin-deep,  
And you just can't deny this is so.  
But for a couple that cooks,  
And has much more than looks,  
Take a gander at Abbey and Joe.

There was Churchill, ol' Winnie,  
And Clementine, his pretty,  
But some folks found them too gabby.  
But here in the States,  
When it comes to top mates,  
It's unanimously Joseph and Abbey.

In Biblical times,  
There was Delilah and Samson—  
A muscular dude, I mean, whoa!  
But if you're looking for dashing,  
There can be no rehashing.  
All day, son, it's Abbey and Joe.

In the Hollywood Hills  
There've been glamorous pairs.  
Brad and Jen's one example I know.  
But if you're looking for fetching  
You can't say that we're stretching  
When we point you to Abbey and Joe.

There's Meghan and Harry,  
Beyonce and Jay Z;  
Las Vegas had Siegfried and Roy.  
But here in our town,  
The best couple, hands down,  
It's Abbey and Shoeless, her boy.

There's Batman and Robin,  
There's Cheech and there's Chong,  
There was Ernie and Bert, you all know.  
But here in the Heartland,  
If you're even half smart, Man,  
Throw your chips in with Abbey and Joe.

There's the Tramp and the Lady,  
Eminem and Slim Shady,  
And Rudolph and Santa, Ho-Ho.  
But here in our village,  
Folks will plunder and pillage  
If they can't hang with Abbey and Joe.



There's SpongeBob and Patrick,  
And Donkey and Shrek,  
Not to mention Scooby and Shaggy.  
But in this land of Aksarben,  
Could there be a more charmin'  
Duo than Joseph and Abbey?

There's Buzz Lightyear and Woody,  
We have Tweety Bird and Puddy  
And we've even got Stitch and Lilo.  
But my fellow Bugeaters,  
Could there be a pair sweeter  
Than our lovable Abbey and Joe?

So while my view may be skewed  
Of the couples reviewed  
And every other Jane and John Doe,  
Right here in Nebraska,  
Well, I just have to ask ya,  
CAN **ANY** TOP ABBEY AND JOE?

So now, please lift your glasses,  
All ye lads and ye lasses,  
And we'll toast the best couple we know.  
For in prose or in rhyme,  
These two really shine,  
And we love you.  
**Here's to Abbey and Joe!**

August 12, 2023  
From Dad

*With many thanks to  
Jack Ormond Ernst*



**FROM SKIPPER'S ATTIC**



*Three young Turks invade Coors Field  
for their first All-Star game (July 1997)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Next issue: An evening with the Evansville Otters; on the road to Asheville.

Skipper