

FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Newsletter of the

NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE

2023: Our 39th Season

Edition No. 26



September 7, 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

WAHOOS WINNING

Through 23 weeks of play and only 3 weeks remaining in the campaign, the **Wahoos** are winning with 10770.2 points, followed by the **Saints** with 10710.7, 59.5 points off the pace, and the **Bums** with 10702.4, 67.8 points back.

The **Cubs** had the best week with 560.6 points to move his team within a few whiskers of the 4th-place **Skipjacks**. The **Bears** were close behind with 499.6 points, and the **Bums** just a shade off at 499.5 points. The **Tigers** trailed the pack with 319.8 points.

Here are the standings, the point totals for Week 23, and the individual point totals:

HSL STANDINGS THRU WEEK 23 ENDING SEPTEMBER 3, 2023

	Team	Points	Pts Back
1	Wahoos	10770.2	-
2	Saints	10710.7	59.5
3	Bums	10702.4	67.8
4	Skipjacks	9998.6	771.6
5	Cubs	9988.3	781.9
6	Monarchs	9875.5	894.7
7	Bears	9847.5	922.7
8	Blues	9578.4	1191.8
9	Tribe	9576.0	1194.2
10	Bombers	9557.5	1212.7
11	Senators	9458.0	1312.2
12	Tigers	9126.4	1643.8
13	Redbirds	8830.8	1939.4



POINT TOTALS FOR WEEK 23

	Team	Pts
1	Cubs	560.6
2	Bears	499.6
3	Bums	499.5
4	Wahoos	487.5
5	Saints	479.5
6	Tribe	475.8
7	Skipjacks	457.9
8	Senators	456.4
9	Redbirds	431.8
10	Bombers	409.8
11	Monarchs	405.5
12	Blues	334.8
13	Tigers	319.8

TOP 25 PITCHERS

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Spencer Strider	Tigers	638.0
2.	Gerrit Cole	Bombers	624.0
3.	Zac Gallen	Bears	579.0
4.	Luis Castillo	Blues	557.0
5.	Blake Snell	Skipjacks	556.0
6.	Zack Wheeler	Cubs	547.0
7.	Logan Gilbert	Bums	533.0
	Kevin Gausman	Bombers	533.0
9.	Logan Webb	Tribe	528.0
10.	Pablo López	Saints	527.0
11.	Justin Steele	Monarchs	524.0
12.	Corbin Burnes	Senators	518.0
13.	Zach Eflin	Redbirds	513.0
14.	Framber Valdez	Wahoos	510.0
15.	Mitch Keller	Saints	500.0
16.	Max Scherzer	Senators	499.0
17.	George Kirby	Blues	494.0
18.	Chris Bassitt	Senators	493.0
19.	Freddy Peralta	Cubs	483.0
	Sonny Gray	Monarchs	483.0
21.	Kodai Senga	Redbirds	474.0
22.	Aaron Nola	Tigers	472.0
23.	Kyle Bradish	Monarchs	466.0
24.	Jesús Luzardo	Saints	460.0

25.	Charlie Morton	Wahoos	451.0
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WHO'S HOT – PITCHING

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Blake Snell	Skipjacks	68.0
2.	Seth Lugo	Wahoos	50.0
3.	Tarik Skubal	Saints	49.0
4.	Bobby Miller	Bums	46.0
5.	Reese Olson	Cubs	43.0
6.	Tylor Megill	Tigers	42.0
7.	Alex Cobb	Cubs	40.0
8.	Max Fried	Redbirds	39.0
	Luis Severino	Cubs	39.0
10.	Kyle Harrison	Bears	38.0
11.	Michael King	Tribe	36.0
	Jordan Lyles	Bombers	36.0
	Chris Bassitt	Senators	36.0
14.	Grayson Rodriguez	Bums	35.0
15.	Johan Oviedo	Blues	34.0
16.	Joe Ryan	Tribe	33.0
	Cole Ragans	Blues	33.0
18.	Charlie Morton	Wahoos	32.0
	Justin Steele	Monarchs	32.0
	Bryan Woo	Senators	32.0
21.	Bryce Elder	Redbirds	31.0
	Jon Gray	Wahoos	31.0
	Freddy Peralta	Cubs	31.0
	Kodai Senga	Redbirds	31.0
	Chris Sale	Monarchs	31.0

WHO'S NOT – PITCHING

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	James Paxton	Monarchs	-17.0
2.	Mike Clevinger	Tigers	-16.0
3.	Merrill Kelly	Tigers	-15.0
4.	Alec Marsh	Blues	-14.0
5.	Kutter Crawford	Wahoos	-13.0
6.	Lance Lynn	Bombers	-11.0
7.	Kyle Gibson	Monarchs	-10.0
8.	Slade Cecconi	Skipjacks	-9.0
9.	Josiah Gray	Redbirds	-8.0
	Jordan Montgomery	Bums	-8.0
	Zac Gallen	Bears	-8.0
	Aaron Nola	Tigers	-8.0

13.	Brandon Pfaadt	Bears	-7.0
14.	Patrick Sandoval	Monarchs	-6.0
15.	Michael Kopech	Bears	-5.0
	Patrick Corbin	Tribe	-5.0
17.	Kyle Freeland	Bombers	-4.0
18.	Pedro Avila	Tribe	-3.0
	George Kirby	Blues	-3.0
20.	Zack Greinke	Blues	-2.0
	Hunter Brown	Wahoos	-2.0
	Justin Verlander	Tigers	-2.0
23.	Luis Castillo	Blues	-1.0

TOP 25 HITTERS

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Cubs	730.8
2.	Shohei Ohtani	Skipjacks	699.3
3.	Mookie Betts	Bombers	698.0
4.	Freddie Freeman	Skipjacks	671.5
5.	Matt Olson	Wahoos	642.8
6.	Kyle Tucker	Monarchs	546.1
7.	Marcus Semien	Cubs	545.2
8.	Juan Soto	Saints	543.4
9.	Corbin Carroll	Bears	536.5
10.	Austin Riley	Saints	534.0
11.	Bobby Witt Jr.	Bums	529.6
12.	Alex Bregman	Bums	524.6
13.	Julio Rodríguez	Bears	522.8
14.	Francisco Lindor	Monarchs	515.4
15.	Adolis García	Skipjacks	511.6
16.	Christian Walker	Redbirds	509.1
17.	Pete Alonso	Bums	507.7
18.	Corey Seager	Tribe	504.4
19.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	498.8
20.	Kyle Schwarber	Wahoos	496.2
21.	Ketel Marte	Saints	493.2
22.	Lane Thomas	Cubs	489.0
23.	Christian Yelich	Tigers	488.5
24.	Rafael Devers	Monarchs	488.1
25.	Nathaniel Lowe	Bums	487.7

WHO'S HOT – HITTING

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Trea Turner	Blues	69.8
2.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Cubs	61.5

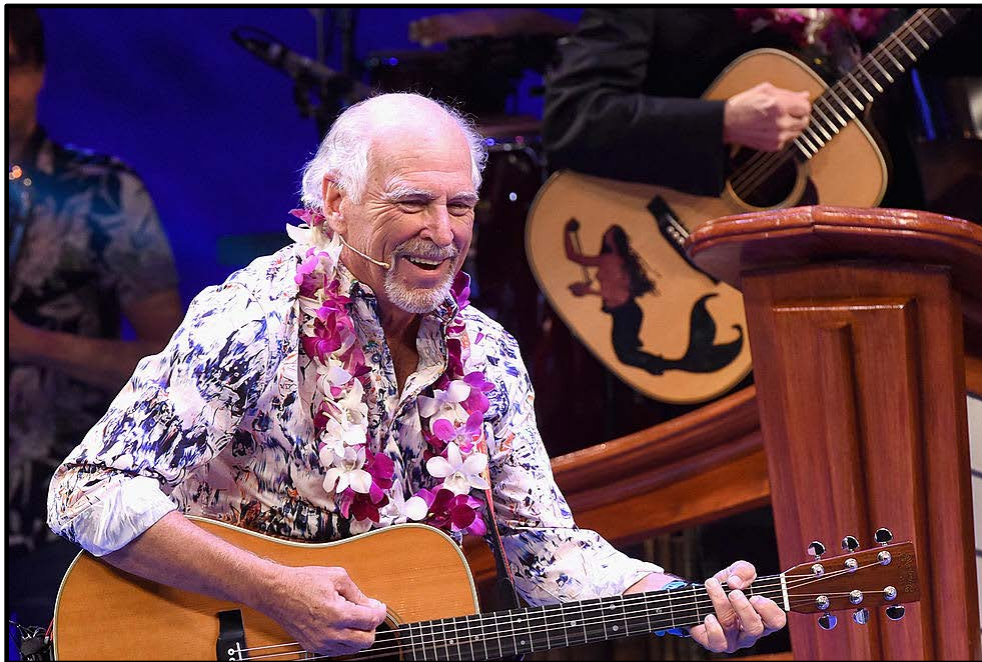
3.	Gleyber Torres	Tigers	48.1
4.	Jordan Walker	Tribe	47.6
5.	J.P. Crawford	Bears	45.2
6.	Marcell Ozuna	Tribe	45.0
	Ian Happ	Redbirds	45.0
8.	Mookie Betts	Bombers	44.0
9.	Yordan Alvarez	Redbirds	43.0
10.	Davis Schneider	Tribe	41.5
11.	Luis Rengifo	Cubs	38.3
12.	Anthony Santander	Skipjacks	38.0
13.	Jorge Polanco	Monarchs	37.8
14.	Royce Lewis	Monarchs	36.5
	Juan Soto	Saints	36.5
16.	DJ Stewart	Cubs	36.0
17.	Gabriel Arias	Bears	35.6
18.	Triston Casas	Bears	35.5
19.	Luis Arraez	Bums	35.4
20.	Mitch Garver	Wahoos	34.6
21.	Mark Canha	Bums	34.1
22.	Nolan Jones	Bears	32.7
23.	Max Muncy	Wahoos	32.6
24.	Cody Bellinger	Tribe	32.5
25.	Lane Thomas	Cubs	31.7

WHO'S NOT – HITTING

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Javier Báez	Monarchs	-2.60
2.	LaMonte Wade Jr.	Cubs	-1.90
3.	Josh Rojas	Skipjacks	-0.50
	Willi Castro	Senators	-0.50
5.	Trevor Story	Skipjacks	-0.40
6.	Nolan Arenado	Bombers	-0.10

Now, let's get to the important stuff.

R.I.P., OLD FRIEND



Jimmy Buffett
1946-2023

I was shocked and deeply saddened to wake up to the news last Saturday morning that Jimmy Buffett had passed away the evening prior at the age of 76. I knew that he had been ill last fall when he canceled the concert that we were planning on going to in San Diego in October, but I never heard an announcement that he was terminally ill, and he ultimately rescheduled some of his canceled concerts. In fact, just about a month ago I started looking around to try to find a concert on the calendar for our next family Buffett extravaganza.

I spent about half the day on Saturday wallowing in self-pity and the rest of the weekend drinking margaritas and reminiscing about all the good times had at Buffett concerts and listening to Buffett music.

My first memory of Jimmy Buffett was when I was in college and at a bar (I know that may come as a shock to some of you) in Okoboji for a fraternity rush party, and singing *Cheeseburger in Paradise* with a bunch of like-spirited Theta Xis and Xi little sisters, screaming like the bunch of drunken banshees that we were. But I didn't become a serious fan until my first year of law school when I lived with Brian Hennings and he had Jimmy Buffett albums frequently playing on the turntable¹.

My first Jimmy Buffett concert, meaning my first step toward becoming a *Parrothead*, was at the Sandstone outdoor amphitheater near Kansas City on August 8, 1984, long before Buffett became a household name. It was a near religious experience for me.

I next saw Buffett at Rosenblatt Stadium in Omaha in August 1985 *after* an Omaha Royals baseball game, and then the following year I again saw him at Sandstone in June 1986. A

¹ It makes me sound kind of ancient, doesn't it? Like I was getting ready to don my zoot suit and break into the *Charleston* or something.

month later I saw him in Chicago at the Deer Creek amphitheater with Brian and Beth Hennings, and then again in 1990 when JT and Mouse and Mouse's pal Wiffy and I went to New Orleans for the Superbowl contest between the San Francisco 49ers and the Denver Broncos, and while there we learned that Buffett was playing and we made a gametime decision to attend the concert.

There have been several other delightful venues at which I have attended Buffett concerts, such as the Shoreline Amphitheatre in the Bay Area, visited in 1992; in a return to Kansas City in 1995; at the Sprint Center in Kansas City in 2011; and at the CenturyLink Center in Omaha in 2012 and 2016. But the three best Buffett experiences were all family junkets: At the MGM Grand in Las Vegas in 2006; at Target Field in Minneapolis in 2018; and the crème de la crème, our Labor Day weekend trip just two years ago (today) to see Jimmy at Red Rocks, Colorado.

I don't think I have ever before tried to rank my favorite Jimmy Buffett songs, but the top five would include *Come Monday*, *Son of a Son of a Sailor*, *It's My Job*, *He Went to Paris*, and my personal favorite, for which the Ernst acreage was nicknamed, *One Particular Harbour*, and it goes like this:

*la ora te natura
E mea arofa teie ao nei
la ora te natura
E mea arofa teie ao nei*

*I know I don't get there often enough
But God knows I surely try
It's a magic kind of medicine
That no doctor could prescribe*

*I used to rule my world from a pay phone
Ships out on the sea
But now times are rough
And I got too much stuff
Can't explain likes of me*

*But there's this one particular harbour
So far but yet so near
Where I see the days as they fade away
And finally disappear*

*But now I think about the good times
Down in the caribbean sunshine
In my younger days I was so bad
Laughin' about all the fun we had*

*I seen enough to feel the world spin
Mixin' different oceans meetin' cousins
Listen to the drummers and the night sounds
Listen to the singers make the world go 'round*

*la ora te natura
E mea arofa teie ao nei*

*la ora te natura
E mea arofa teie ao nei*

*Lakes below the mountain
Flow into the sea
Like oils applied to canvas
They permeate through me*

*And there's that one particular harbour
Sheltered from the wind
Where the children play on the shore each day
And all are safe within*

*Most mysterious calling harbour
So far but yet so near
I can see the day when my hair's full gray
And I finally disappear*

*la ora te natura
E mea arofa teie ao nei
la ora te natura
E mea arofa teie ao nei*

*la ora te natura
E mea arofa teie ao nei
la ora te natura (ua pau te maitai no te fenua)
E mea arofa teie ao nei*

*la ora te natura
E mea arofa teie ao nei
la ora te natura (ua pau te maitai no te fenua)
E mea arofa teie ao nei,
 hey now, hey now, hey now*

*la ora te natura
E mea arofa teie ao nei*

*Ua pau te maitai no te fenua
Te zai noa ra te ora o te mitie
Ua pau te maitai no te fenua
Te zai noa ra te ora o te mitie*

Memories, ah, the memories.

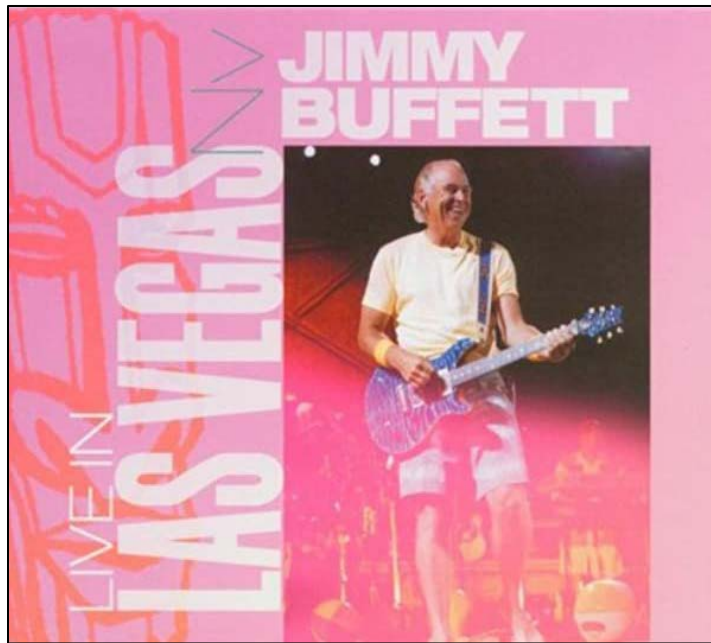
DEER CREEK – JULY 1986



With Brian and Beth Hennings

LAS VEGAS – 2006

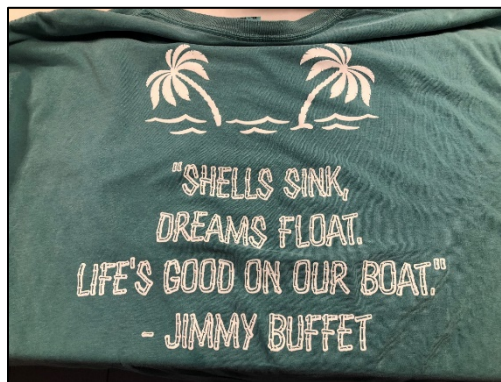




TARGET FIELD – JUNE 30, 2018



Road Trip to the Twin Cities!





Parrotheads unite: Like father, like son!



Who Cares About the Eagles?



Party on at Target Field!

RED ROCKS – SEPTEMBER 7, 2021



Fins to the Left!



Red Rocks Rocks!



Dueling Parrotheads

God bless you, Jimmy, for bringing so much joy to so many of us. It only hurts so much because it means so much.

* * * * *

And that's it, fellas. Tomorrow at this time I will be in Chicago at a Cubs-DBacks game with the Fantastic Four—the rest of you lads in the HSL blow chunks!

Ta-Ta!

Skipper