

FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Newsletter of the

NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE

2023: Our 39th Season

Edition No. 27



September 14, 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 NEARING REPEAT TITLE;
BUMS AND SAINTS SINKING;
MONARCHS MAKING STATEMENT

Hombres:

The story of Week 24 in the Hot Stove League is that the **Wahoos** have now separated themselves from the 2nd and 3rd place teams and appear destined for a repeat Hot Stove League title. So evidently PAwesome *does* have time to devote to this little hobby of his, and is not all *that* consumed by his part-time job at Bridges Trust. Bully.

However, it must also be said that Screech and his soaring **Monarchs** are white hot right now, having notched 562.1 points for the week to flutter into 5th place, within striking distance of the 4th place **Cubs** just 43 points ahead of him. Bully.

As per usual, and thanks to Linda, here are the HSL standings through Week 24, point totals for Week 24, and the individual pitcher and hitter lists. Enjoy.

HSL STANDINGS THRU WEEK 24
ENDING SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

	Team	Points	Pts Back
1	Wahoos	11269.2	-
2	Bums	11113.4	155.8
3	Saints	11096.2	173.0
4	Cubs	10480.6	788.6
5	Monarchs	10437.6	831.6
6	Bears	10372.8	896.4
7	Skipjacks	10276.0	993.2
8	Tribe	10096.9	1172.3
9	Blues	10023.6	1245.6
10	Bombers	9989.9	1279.3
11	Senators	9793.8	1475.4
12	Tigers	9600.5	1668.7
13	Redbirds	9208.3	2060.9



POINT TOTALS FOR WEEK 24

	Team	Pts
1	Monarchs	562.1
2	Bears	525.3
3	Tribe	520.9
4	Wahoos	499.0
5	Cubs	492.3
6	Tigers	474.1
7	Blues	445.2
8	Bombers	432.4
9	Bums	411.0
10	Saints	385.5
11	Redbirds	377.5
12	Senators	335.8
13	Skipjacks	277.4

TOP 25 PITCHERS

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Gerrit Cole	Bombers	686.0
2.	Spencer Strider	Tigers	628.0
3.	Zac Gallen	Bears	624.0
4.	Justin Steele	Monarchs	595.0
5.	Pablo López	Saints	592.0
6.	Luis Castillo	Blues	588.0
7.	Blake Snell	Skipjacks	583.0
8.	Zack Wheeler	Cubs	582.0
9.	Kevin Gausman	Bombers	575.0
10.	Logan Webb	Tribe	574.0
11.	Corbin Burnes	Senators	562.0
12.	Logan Gilbert	Bums	551.0
13.	Zach Eflin	Redbirds	539.0
14.	Framber Valdez	Wahoos	536.0
15.	Chris Bassitt	Senators	528.0
16.	George Kirby	Blues	506.0
17.	Merrill Kelly	Tigers	504.0
18.	Sonny Gray	Monarchs	498.0
	Kyle Bradish	Monarchs	498.0
20.	Freddy Peralta	Cubs	494.0
21.	Kodai Senga	Redbirds	492.0
22.	Mitch Keller	Saints	489.0
23.	Max Scherzer	Senators	488.0
24.	Jesús Luzardo	Saints	482.0
25.	Aaron Nola	Tigers	478.0



WHO'S HOT – PITCHING

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Justin Steele	Monarchs	71.0
2.	Pablo López	Saints	64.0
3.	Gerrit Cole	Bombers	62.0
4.	Merrill Kelly	Tigers	53.0
	José Berríos	Senators	53.0
6.	Cole Ragans	Blues	51.0
7.	Logan Webb	Tribe	46.0
8.	Zac Gallen	Bears	45.0
9.	Corbin Burnes	Senators	44.0
10.	Kevin Gausman	Bombers	42.0
11.	Brayan Bello	Wahoos	39.0
	Tyler Glasnow	Bears	39.0
13.	Mike Clevinger	Tigers	38.0
14.	Ryan Pepiot	Bears	36.0
	Brandon Woodruff	Tribe	36.0
16.	Chris Bassitt	Senators	35.0
	Zack Wheeler	Cubs	35.0
18.	Tanner Bibee	Bums	34.0
	Bryce Elder	Redbirds	34.0
	Hunter Greene	Bears	34.0
21.	Tyler Anderson	Wahoos	32.0
	Justin Verlander	Tigers	32.0
	Jameson Taillon	Monarchs	32.0
	Kyle Bradish	Monarchs	32.0
25.	Luis Castillo	Blues	31.0

WHO'S NOT – PITCHING

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Lance Lynn	Bombers	-13.0
2.	Patrick Corbin	Tribe	-12.0
3.	Mitch Keller	Saints	-11.0
	Max Scherzer	Senators	-11.0
5.	Spencer Strider	Tigers	-10.0
6.	Seth Lugo	Wahoos	-9.0
	Carlos Rodón	Skipjacks	-9.0
8.	Rich Hill	Bombers	-8.0
9.	Andre Jackson	Senators	-7.0
	Michael Lorenzen	Bums	-7.0
11.	Zach Davies	Tigers	-6.0
	Chris Sale	Monarchs	-6.0
	Patrick Sandoval	Monarchs	-6.0
	Johnny Cueto	Skipjacks	-6.0
	Andrew Abbott	Tribe	-6.0
16.	Nathan Eovaldi	Wahoos	-4.0



	Bryan Woo	Senators	-4.0
	Drew Rom	Redbirds	-4.0
	Hunter Brown	Wahoos	-4.0
	Adam Wainwright	Bombers	-4.0
21.	Jack Flaherty	Wahoos	-3.0
	Zack Greinke	Blues	-3.0
	Brady Singer	Saints	-3.0
24.	Lucas Giolito	Senators	-2.0
25.	Peter Lambert	Skipjacks	-1.0

TOP 25 HITTERS

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Cubs	773.4
2.	Mookie Betts	Bombers	706.4
3.	Matt Olson	Wahoos	702.8
4.	Freddie Freeman	Skipjacks	699.6
5.	Shohei Ohtani	Skipjacks	699.3
6.	Marcus Semien	Cubs	599.7
7.	Kyle Tucker	Monarchs	580.1
8.	Corbin Carroll	Bears	566.5
9.	Julio Rodriguez	Bears	560.8
10.	Juan Soto	Saints	556.9
11.	Austin Riley	Saints	555.3
12.	Alex Bregman	Bums	552.4
13.	Kyle Schwarber	Wahoos	547.7
14.	Bobby Witt Jr.	Bums	540.9
15.	Francisco Lindor	Monarchs	540.7
16.	Corey Seager	Tribe	537.9
17.	Pete Alonso	Bums	529.5
18.	Ketel Marte	Saints	518.9
19.	Christian Walker	Redbirds	512.9
20.	Adolis García	Skipjacks	511.6
21.	Rafael Devers	Monarchs	511.5
22.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	509.6
23.	José Ramírez	Tribe	508.5
24.	Paul Goldschmidt	Cubs	505.6
25.	Nathaniel Lowe	Bums	502.4

WHO'S HOT – HITTING

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Matt Olson	Wahoos	60.0
2.	Jose Altuve	Tribe	55.3
3.	Marcus Semien	Cubs	54.5
	Yordan Alvarez	Redbirds	54.5
5.	Kyle Schwarber	Wahoos	51.5
6.	Seiya Suzuki	Blues	48.5
7.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Cubs	42.6



8.	José Abreu	Blues	41.3
9.	Nolan Gorman	Saints	40.5
10.	Willi Castro	Senators	38.0
	Julio Rodríguez	Bears	38.0
12.	Trea Turner	Blues	36.6
13.	Aaron Hicks	Monarchs	36.5
14.	Royce Lewis	Monarchs	35.1
15.	Brandon Lowe	Wahoos	34.4
16.	Kyle Tucker	Monarchs	34.0
	George Springer	Bears	34.0
18.	Corey Seager	Tribe	33.5
19.	Tommy Pham	Wahoos	32.5
20.	Yoán Moncada	Bums	32.1
21.	Jack Suwinski	Cubs	32.0
	Willson Contreras	Bombers	32.0
	Austin Hays	Cubs	32.0
24.	Eddie Rosario	Tigers	31.5
25.	Matt Vierling	Tigers	31.2

WHO'S NOT – HITTING

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Adam Duvall	Skipjacks	-4.9
2.	Whit Merrifield	Senators	-2.2
3.	Patrick Bailey	Cubs	-2.0
4.	Ryan McMahon	Wahoos	-0.5



THE TRIP 2023, AHHH, WRIGLEY FIELD!

WRIGLEY FIELD



"The Friendly Confines"

For the Nincompoopish Nonet who did not attend the 38th almost annual Hot Stove League Trip to Chicago and Wrigley Field, take this: *Na na-na-na na na, boo boo (sound of a 30-second strawberry)*. That'll teach you to ignore your Hot Stove League destiny and duty and blow off one of our most sacred traditions.

With that out of my system, the 2023 Hot Stove League junket to Chicago was an absolute blast. Brother Shamu found us commodious and affordable accommodations via VRBO in an elegant old brownstone about a mile from Wrigley Field, for starters. Then, the four unafraid¹ stalwarts of the Hot Stove League, namely, Sunny, Shamu, Magpie and Skipper, bravely faced up to the very real and not merely imagined threat of scorn, reprisal, recrimination, retribution and/or revenge on the part of our domestic partners by attending this free-spirited and free-wheeling event. So worth it.

After a delightful revisitiation of Murphy's Bleacher Bar and the partaking of delectable burgers and dogs at that establishment along with not just one frothy ale, we then were treated to a terrific pitcher's duel on Friday afternoon between Zac Gallen of the Diamondbacks and Jameson Taillon of the Cubs, which ultimately resulted in a 1-0 shutout win for the Diamondbacks and their ace. In point of fact, over the course of the two games that we saw on Friday and Saturday, we relished the opportunity to watch the Nos. 3, 4 and 17 highest-scoring pitchers

¹ As in, the polar opposite of *"We can't go, Bluto, we are afraid!"*

in the league in Zac Gallen, Justin Steele and Merrill Kelly, and together with the Cubs' Friday afternoon starter, James Taillon, we saw four of the "Who's Hot" pitchers for the week, Nos. 1, 4, 8 and 21.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE



Perfect early September weather, so good that Sunny only had to wear three layers of garments to protect his upper torso, including a fetching Camp Wrigleyville shawl.



Fantastic food, including two wonderful Italian joints (the PR Italian Bistro and Mia Francesca) located between our place of lodging and Wrigleyville.



Breakfast at a true "joint" (the Diner Grill) just two blocks from our retreat.



Salty peanuts.



Cold beer.



Shamu doppelgängers.



Lively team Spades.



A charming couple sitting behind us who admired our special tee shirts, who had the yellowest damned teeth I have ever seen, who marveled at our list of ballparks visited and then proceeded to dominate the conversation with numbing details of the five ballparks they have seen and the three they want to see after retirement.



Great conversation.

PICTURES

As usual, the pictures help to tell the story:



THOUGHT BUBBLES:

Skipper: (Golly, I love Wrigley Field, and how lucky I am to be here with these three outstanding and courageous comrades. #BLESSED.)

Sunny: (Where in blue blazes are the mascots? Promises were made!!!)

Magpie: (Would it be wrong to pray for the entire **Wahoos** team to go down in a fiery airliner crash? I don't think **that's** too much to ask.)

Shamu: (I can't believe that nobody has brought me a Joe Oliver-sized plastic helmet of ice cream. Arrrrgh. Promises were made!!!)



Magpie and Skipper sport their ceremonial tee shirts in a stirring homage to Trip No. 38.



Shamu sheepishly poses with his new ballpark friend who risked life and limb to protect the poor woman sitting behind Shamu, who had to be taken away via medical helicopter for treatment.



Good old Wrigley!



Happy Days Are Here Again!



Shamu nervously protects himself from another potential foul ball beaming, despite being a quarter of a mile from the ballpark.



Friday night dinner: Mamma mia!



The "Joint"



Our new Wrigleyville hangout: Bernie's!



THOUGHT BUBBLE:
("Hmmm. I wonder if they're serving a meal on my Chicago to Des Moines flight.")

In summation, another fantastic Hot Stove League Trip. Thanks again to my three first-rate and courageous comrades for signing up and sharing your good company and outstanding cheer.

Skipper

