

FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Newsletter of the

NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE

2023: Our 39th Season

Edition No. 9



April 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

SAINTS FAIL; SENATORS SUNK

Gentlemen:

The story of Week 2 was the high-flying **Saints** and their inimitable pilot, B.T. as the **Saints** posted a league-best 588.6 points for the week, rocketing past the **Blues** and into 1st place. At the other end of the universe, the lifeless **Senators** could only muster up a total of 327.0 points for the week, cementing their position in the league cellar. The baseball gods have spoken: The **Senators** are Sunk. It's going to be a long season.

Here are the standings through games of Sunday, April 9, 2023:

	Team	Points	Pts Back
1	Saints	857.7	-
2	Blues	766.0	91.7
3	Monarchs	750.2	107.5
4	Skipjacks	745.8	111.9
5	Wahoos	733.2	124.5
6	Bums	668.4	189.3
7	Bombers	659.2	198.5
8	Tigers	637.0	220.7
9	Redbirds	628.5	229.2
10	Tribe	613.1	244.6
11	Cubs	539.4	318.3
12	Bears	492.8	364.9
13	Senators	458.9	398.8

And here are the point totals for the second week of play:



	Team	Pts
1	Saints	588.6
2	Wahoos	500.5
3	Blues	491.8
4	Skipjacks	470.3
5	Monarchs	441.9
6	Redbirds	427.4
7	Bombers	425.3
8	Bums	406.4
9	Tribe	378.8
10	Bears	360.2
11	Tigers	341.7
12	Cubs	337.7
13	Senators	327.0

INDIVIDUAL TOTALS

Here are the top 25 pitchers for the season, led by Jeffrey Springs of the **Monarchs** and Drew Rasmussen of the **Bums** with 77.0 points apiece.

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Jeffrey Springs	Monarchs	77.0
	Drew Rasmussen	Bums	77.0
3.	Gerrit Cole	Bombers	69.0
4.	Marcus Stroman	Tigers	65.0
5.	Freddy Peralta	Cubs	62.0
6.	Julio Urías	Saints	61.0
7.	Shohei Ohtani	Redbirds	60.0
	Anthony DeSclafani	Skipjacks	60.0
	Kyle Freeland	Bombers	60.0
10.	Dustin May	Blues	58.0
11.	Luis Castillo	Blues	57.0
	Pablo López	Saints	57.0
13.	Shane McClellan	Blues	56.0
14.	Dylan Cease	Monarchs	55.0
15.	Joe Ryan	Tribe	54.0
	Nick Lodolo	Tribe	54.0
	Jesús Luzardo	Saints	54.0
18.	Kodai Senga	Redbirds	53.0

	Justin Steele	Monarchs	53.0
20.	Jordan Montgomery	Bums	51.0
	Sonny Gray	Bombers	51.0
22.	Brandon Woodruff	Tribe	49.0
	Sandy Alcantara	Bums	49.0
	Michael Wacha	Wahoos	49.0
25.	Kevin Gausman	Bombers	48.0

Now here's the "Who's Hot" list of the hottest pitchers for Week 2, led by Drew Rasmussen of the **Bums** with 77.0 points, Freddy Peralta of the **Cubs** with the second highest total at 62.0.

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Drew Rasmussen	Bums	77.0
2.	Freddy Peralta	Cubs	62.0
3.	Anthony DeSclafani	Skipjacks	60.0
4.	Sandy Alcantara	Bums	41.0
5.	Michael Wacha	Wahoos	38.0
	Jordan Montgomery	Bums	38.0
7.	Kris Bubic	Tribe	37.0
8.	Nestor Cortes	Saints	36.0
9.	Jeffrey Springs	Monarchs	35.0
	Nick Lodolo	Tribe	35.0
	Jon Gray	Wahoos	35.0
	Jacob deGrom	Bears	35.0
13.	Sonny Gray	Bombers	34.0
	Alek Manoah	Skipjacks	34.0
15.	Mitch Keller	Saints	33.0
16.	Kyle Freeland	Bombers	32.0
	Bryce Elder	Redbirds	32.0
	Gerrit Cole	Bombers	32.0
	Marcus Stroman	Tigers	32.0
	Julio Urías	Saints	32.0
	Kevin Gausman	Bombers	32.0
22.	Jesús Luzardo	Saints	30.0
	Dustin May	Blues	30.0
	Pablo López	Saints	30.0
	Shohei Ohtani	Redbirds	30.0

And now here's the "Who's Not" pitching list for the second week, with Andrew Heaney of the **Bears** at the top with negative 15.0 points, followed by Carlos Carrasco of the **Cubs** and Lance Lynn of the **Bombers** with minus 12.0 apiece. However, looking down the list a little bit

further, one finds no fewer than six **Senators** in negative territory for the week: Lucas Giolito (-9.0); José Berríos (-7.0); Ross Stripling (-5.0); Max Scherzer (-4.0); Corbin Burnes (-3.0); and Eduardo Rodriguez (-3.0).

Like I said, it's gonna be a long season.

	Pitchers	Roster	Pts
1.	Andrew Heaney	Bears	-15.0
2.	Carlos Carrasco	Cubs	-12.0
	Lance Lynn	Bombors	-12.0
4.	Drew Smyly	Bombors	-9.0
	Lucas Giolito	Senators	-9.0
6.	Noah Syndergaard	Skipjacks	-8.0
	Eric Lauer	Cubs	-8.0
8.	José Berríos	Senators	-7.0
	Rich Hill	Cubs	-7.0
10.	José Suarez	Tribe	-6.0
11.	Ross Stripling	Senators	-5.0
12.	Max Scherzer	Senators	-4.0
13.	Corbin Burnes	Senators	-3.0
	Patrick Corbin	Bombors	-3.0
	Blake Snell	Bombors	-3.0
	Eduardo Rodriguez	Senators	-3.0
17.	Spencer Turnbull	Tribe	-1.0
	David Peterson	Bears	-1.0
	Edward Cabrera	Skipjacks	-1.0
	Clarke Schmidt	Tribe	-1.0
	Austin Gomber	Tigers	-1.0

TOP 25 HITTERS

Adam Duvall of the **Skipjacks** leads all hitters with 76.1 points, followed by Bryan Reynolds of the **Monarchs** with 72.0. Go figure.

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Adam Duvall	Skipjacks	76.1
2.	Bryan Reynolds	Monarchs	72.0
3.	Matt Chapman	Cubs	69.9
4.	Matt Olson	Wahoos	62.1
5.	Mike Trout	Senators	60.6
6.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	59.5
7.	Wander Franco	Blues	56.8

8.	Randy Arozarena	Saints	56.0
9.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	55.9
10.	Aaron Judge	Wahoos	55.0
11.	Rafael Devers	Monarchs	53.9
12.	James Outman	Skipjacks	53.7
13.	Brian Anderson	Blues	53.4
14.	Will Smith	Wahoos	53.2
15.	Luis Robert Jr.	Blues	53.0
16.	Bo Bichette	Bears	52.5
17.	Andrés Giménez	Bums	52.2
18.	Freddie Freeman	Skipjacks	50.9
19.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Cubs	50.3
20.	Pete Alonso	Bums	50.3
21.	Gleyber Torres	Tigers	49.8
22.	Yordan Alvarez	Redbirds	49.6
23.	Shohei Ohtani	Skipjacks	48.5
24.	Adley Rutschman	Skipjacks	45.0
25.	Ty France	Saints	44.9

WHO'S HOT – HITTING

In the "Who's Hot – Hitting" Department, Bryan Reynolds of the **Monarchs** led the way during the second week of play with 62.0 points, and Matt Chapman of the **Cubs** was second with 54.3 points:

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Bryan Reynolds	Monarchs	62.0
2.	Matt Chapman	Cubs	54.3
3.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	45.8
4.	Michael Conforto	Skipjacks	43.0
5.	Brian Anderson	Blues	42.1
6.	Luis Robert Jr.	Blues	42.0
7.	Mike Trout	Senators	40.6
8.	Freddie Freeman	Skipjacks	39.6
9.	Matt Olson	Wahoos	39.3
10.	Bo Bichette	Bears	39.2
11.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Cubs	38.3
12.	Willy Adames	Cubs	38.0
13.	Randy Arozarena	Saints	37.0
14.	Austin Riley	Saints	36.5
15.	Rafael Devers	Monarchs	36.2

	James Outman	Skipjacks	36.2
17.	Gleyber Torres	Tigers	35.1
18.	Andrés Giménez	Bums	34.7
19.	Nelson Cruz	Wahoos	34.5
	Myles Straw	Redbirds	34.5
	Shohei Ohtani	Skipjacks	34.5
22.	Pete Alonso	Bums	34.1
23.	Hunter Renfroe	Wahoos	34.0
24.	Adam Duvall	Skipjacks	33.5
	Juan Soto	Saints	33.5

WHO'S NOT – HITTING

And finally, here is the “Who’s Not – Hitting” list, led by Robbie Grossman of the **Bums** and C.J. Cron with -5.0 each, and also including the **Senators’** Austin Meadows at -2.0. It’s all coming together.

	Batters	Roster	Pts
1.	Robbie Grossman	Bums	-5.0
	C.J. Cron	Monarchs	-5.0
3.	Danny Jansen	Bombers	-4.5
4.	Kiké Hernández	Wahoos	-3.0
5.	Austin Meadows	Senators	-2.0
6.	Josh Bell	Bombers	-0.9
7.	Austin Hays	Wahoos	-0.5

Enough whining, let’s talk about something fun, like a visit to a new minor league stadium:

A GEM IN NEARBY FREDERICKSBURG

Last weekend HQ and I made a junket to the District of Columbia to visit daughter Katy and her husband, Joel Hagstrom. Ate at some great restaurants, had a great time. Purely by coincidence (😊), the nearby Fredericksburg Nationals had a home game in town on Easter Sunday, and somehow the old Skipper managed to persuade our hosts to pay a visit to Virginia Credit Union Stadium, in its second year of existence.

The home of the FredNats is shiny and new and loaded with amenities. While it may not be the traditional red brick and green steel ballpark structure, it is still a first rate place to catch a game. A few pictures follow:



Virginia Credit Union Stadium



What Better Place to Spend Easter Sunday?



Fam Fans

On a sun-splashed Easter afternoon, we watched a terrific ballgame between the FredNats and the Lynchburg Hillcats in a Carolina League contest, a brisk¹ game which was kept moving by the new-normal play clock. A crowd of 4,007 excited fans looked on as the Hillcats plated a run in the top of the 9th to tie the game. When the FredNats couldn't answer in the bottom of the 9th, the game went into extra innings, starting with a Lynchburg Hillcat runner on second base. When he scored to give Lynchburg a 2-1 lead, it looked like the Nats were out of luck, but a walk-off hit by Elijah Green in the bottom of the 10th drove in the winning run for the Fredericksburg Nine. A salty 3-2 win for the Nats.



FredNats Win in Walk-off!

¹ 2 hours and 48 minutes, to be exact.



Nats Celebrate Walk-off Win

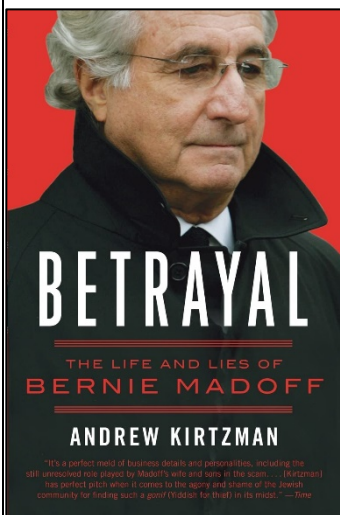


Thanks to Gus the Great

Virginia Credit Union Stadium was my first minor league ballpark of the 2023 season, and 96th overall. Can't wait for the next one!

BOOK REPORT:
BETRAYAL: THE LIFE AND LIES OF BERNIE MADOFF

By Andrew Kirtzman
Published by Harper Collins in 2009



Last week while in D.C. for our visit, I took along a book that I recently picked up because it was authored by Andrew Kirtzman, the same guy who wrote the book on Rudy Giuliani's crash and burn that I recently reported on. It is a complete page-turner that I finished in two days, and I have been talking about it with anyone who will listen ever since. It is an epic tale of deception and betrayal by Madoff, and also an epic tale of failure on the part of the Securities and Exchange Commission, which investigated Madoff multiple times after receiving numerous substantial leads.

Kirtzman sinks the hook immediately in the book with his Introduction section on page 1, as he describes the 95th birthday party for a wealthy old Jewish man by the name of Carl Shapiro at Club Colette in Palm Beach. He describes the lavish arrangements made for this celebration which took place in February of 2008, with waiters carrying trays of Iranian caviar and Blinis while Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme warmed up in the wings. He describes the party as a "decidedly Jewish affair," at which the wealthy guests were treated to a private performance of the Israeli Philharmonic string quartet. Robert Craft, the owner of the New England Patriots, presented his old Jewish friend with a birthday cake the size of a dining room table.

Attending this party was one of Carl's long-time friends and trusted advisor, Bernie Madoff, just ten months away from being arrested and jailed when his Ponzi scheme collapsed. As the author put it: "How could Carl Shapiro know that the man he loved as a son had stolen hundreds of millions of dollars from him to keep his scam afloat? How could he know that in ten months, Bernie Madoff would confess that his remarkable success was all a lie? How could they know this glorious evening that this revered man was betraying them all? On this magical night, as Carl and his wife danced to Steve and Eydie's serenade, Bernie Madoff sat in his chair and wore the look of a decent man."

One of the most fascinating books I have read in years. Absolutely jaw-dropping. Do yourself a favor and read it.

* * * * *

That's it for Edition No. 9. Have a great weekend, amigos!

Skipper