

The Winter Newsletter

of The League to be Named Later

Now in our 8th Season!

Early March 1996

1996 PREVIEW

LTBNL plans for 8th season

This time last year, League to be Named Later owners were sitting on their butts, waiting for a used-car dealer from Milwaukee to cut a deal with a pasty-faced labor boss, and liberate the Rotisserie world from Replacement Baseball Hell. Thankfully, that melodrama has run its course. We may not have labor peace, but we have had a normal -- not a "nuclear" -- winter, with trades, free agent signings, and the hot stove league in full swing. This year, LTBNL owners can save their agonizing for their freeze lists and Auction planning.

Many questions are to be answered in the 1996 season, which promises to be the first *full* major league season since 1993. Can the three-time champion QuagMyers repeat, or will the always-formidable Karnold Knowledge and Dan's Fever challenge? For that matter, can the coveted Cup to be Named Later be won for only the second time by someone named something other than "Myers"? Will the Green Monsters rally from their worst-ever showing in 1995, and will the Sol Train manage to escape the LTBNL basement for the first time ever? Will chicken wing magnates Greg and Doug May have enough energy left after opening their new restaurant to field competitive teams and wage their own personal battle for May supremacy? How many of the Wrecking Crew's tag-team

owners will show up for the Draft -- or will they send someone else entirely? What will the Southpaws do for inside information now that Kent Mercker is in the American League? Can the Candy Strippers repeat as Dinger Queen, or will they set their sights higher and try to compete in some of the other categories? Can the Show Hoffs build a starting pitching staff to complement their strong offensive squad and bullpen, and can the Underdaws manage to provide the LTBNL with a spicier controversy than the Shawn Barton fracas?



The coveted Cup to be Named Later

The 1996 Rotisserie High Holy Day, a/k/a, the '96 Auction Draft, falls this year on **Saturday March 30**. We will try to start relatively early in the day (say by 11:00) so as not to interfere with your NCAA Final Four viewing plans. If you absolutely cannot take part that day, please let the League Office know as soon as possible. This year the festivities will return to the Cincinnati area, to Karnold Knowledge world headquarters, hard by Mount Lookout Square. Freeze lists will be due by midnight on March 25.

1995 IN REVIEW

We move now to the 1995 Rotisserie year in review, our annual compendium of random musings, half-baked analysis, and assorted cheap shots at the expense of other owners. As is our wont here at the League Office, we apologize in advance and with all sincerity for any factual errors or made-up quotes. To the extent that we offend or amuse, we hope to do so on a fairly even basis. And as we have mentioned in the past, if your team's exploits are not well represented herein, we sincerely request that you do something amusing next year.

Any review of 1995 has to begin with this headline ...

Pitchers take the year off, again

Probably all LTBNL owners should have sensed that another offensive juggernaut of a season was afoot when they gathered at the home of the head Pecker Greg May on May 6, 1995. As it turned out, more runs were scored that day (118) than on any other day in National League history.

1995 was another banner year for offense, Greg Maddux excluded. Shortened season or no, the 4,081 home runs hit in the majors in 1995 were second only to 1987 in major league history (4,458). The NL batting average in 1995 was .271

(.263 including pitchers), down only slightly from '94 (.267 including pitchers, which itself was the highest in 55 years). The overall ERA in the NL in was 4.18, again down just a bit from '94's 4.21, which in turn was the highest since 1930. The NL Ratio was 1.376 (1.386 in 1994). In the LTBNL, the batting average was .274, the ERA was 4.07, and the Ratio was 1.345. In other words, any hitter batting under .274 was probably bringing your average down and costing you points, while a pitcher with a 4.00 ERA was quite possibly the ace of your staff.

All in all, it was enough to make a Rotisserie owner feel like taking matters into his or her own hands, which is precisely what Dan Myers of Dan's Fever did during a particularly bad pitching week for his squad. Enraged by



Myers vs. Myers: Martial arts training came in handy

the recent late-inning performance of his supposed closer, Randy Myers (7.15 ERA in month of July), the Fever's boss caught a plane to Chicago, a cab to Wrigley, and, after another untimely homer, raced onto to the field and pummeled the Cubs' reliever into submission. Obviously, this

was bound to happen sooner or later, but the League Office simply cannot condone this type of behavior.

The new park in the NL in 1995, Coors Field, didn't hurt offensive production any. Maybe all you need to know about the 1995 LTBNL champion QuagMyers' season is that their offense featured Dante Bichette, Andres Galarraga, and Vinny Castilla, or 75% of the "Blake Street Bombers," the quartet that combined for 139 homers in the rarefied Denver air. Coors yielded 241 home runs in 1995, about 80 more than Wrigley or Fulton County or any other supposed launching pad. According to STATS Inc., it was 64 percent easier to score a run there than in the average NL park, 89 percent easier to hit a homer there, and 175 percent easier to hit a triple. All told, the Rockies and their opponents hit .315 in games played at Coors, as opposed to .250 in games played elsewhere.

Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, however, here is another look at the final standings:

1995 Final LTBNL Standings

	Batting	Pitching	Total
1) QuagMyers	27.50	43.00	70.50
2) Karnold Knowledge	32.00	28.00	60.00
3) Dan's Fever	24.50	34.50	59.00
4) Gregory Peckers	39.00	18.00	57.00
5) Doug Outs	26.00	31.00	57.00
6) Candy Stripers	26.50	30.00	56.50
7) Show Hoff's	32.00	22.00	54.00
8) Southpaws	24.00	24.00	48.00
9) Wrecking Crew	29.00	14.00	43.00
10) Green Monsters	7.00	33.00	40.00
11) Underdawgs	17.50	22.00	39.50
12) Sol Train	27.00	12.50	39.50

The QuagMyers won their third title in the seven-year history of the League to be Named Later, tying Dan's Fever for most flags captured. Karnold Knowledge took second, returning to a money-winning position after a two-year absence. The Fever, mired in last place in June, did not have one of their stronger clubs, but did have Greg Maddux, and that's all you need to know about that. The Gregory Peckers put the disappointment of the strike and 1994's aborted title surge behind them, and contended all season.

The tie-breaker rules were put to good use in 1995. The Gregory Peckers and the Doug Outs tied for fourth place after an epic battle for family hegemony. (Each of the May brothers confided to the League Office near the end of the season that it would be *nice* to finish in the money, but his only real goal was to prevail over the other). The Peckers and the Doug Outs remained tied after the first tie-breaker, each besting the other in four of the eight Rotisserie categories. For the first time in LTBNL history, the second tie-breaker was utilized: The League Office was compelled to compare their total team at-bats plus three times their total innings pitched. This is a real rule, set out in Article IX of the *Official Constitution of Rotisserie Baseball*, which, of course, is contained in the Official Book, which nobody buys anymore but the League Office. The League Office can only speculate as to the reasoning behind the rule (the guess here is that it attempts to reward the team with the better performance over the greater number of opportunities to screw things up), but the rule at least has the advantage of breaking a tie. For the record, the final tally under the second tiebreaker (henceforth, *The May Rule*) was Peckers 8,405, Doug Outs 8,221.

More conventionally, the Underdawgs were awarded eleventh place over Sol Train under the first tie-breaker, besting the Train in six of the eight Rotisserie categories.

The heartbreak for the Train is that it was the third last-place finish in their three-year tenure in the LTBNL.

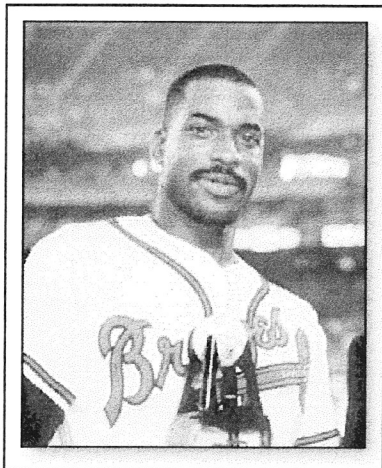
Backtracking still further, we now turn to a review of the 1995 Auction Draft:

Owners "wing it" at 1995 Draft

Sorry. May 6, 1995 dawned sunny and warm. LTBNL owners, groggy from another sleepless night anticipating the long-delayed draft, washed down their breakfasts of Roloids with black coffee, and headed to the suburban Columbus home of head Pecker Greg May. For the first time ever, the Draft was being held outside Cincinnati, and for only the second time ever, it would take place after the start of the National League Championship Season. Nine games into the NL schedule, LTBNL general managers were being given the chance to gain an unusual degree of insight into how things would go in the NL in 1995. By Draft Day, for example, perennial prospect Willie Greene was already 2-19 (.105) and headed back to Indianapolis, while Rudy Seanez, for whom the QuagMyers had obtained Greene from the Sol Train, already had three saves in the Dodgers' first three games. (Alas, he would not garner another save all season, but who knew?)

By virtue of their last place finish in '94, the Sol Train once again were awarded the honor of throwing out the ceremonial first name. Sitting on the second-largest war chest, with \$195 to spend in the Draft, the Train knew that Dan's Fever had owned Fred "The Crime Canine" McGriff every year in LTBNL history and had but \$111 to spend at the Auction. At exactly 12:28 p.m., The Train threw down the gauntlet, crying "Fred McGriff, \$10!" and the Draft was underway. The Fever prevailed on McGriff, spending \$52, almost half their Draft Day budget on this single player. In fact, three of the first four players selected went for \$50 or more

(Marquis Grissom and Jeff Bagwell, to the Train and Peckers, respectively, were the others), and it would probably be unkind of the



The Crime Dog went first

League Office to note that those three showed an average loss of almost \$28. (In fact, to take it a step further, if you add the fifth player chosen, Ken Hill, who lost a league-leading \$36, four of the first five players chosen lost \$24 or more, for an average loss of almost \$30.)

The most profitable buy of the first round was undoubtedly the purchase by Karnold Nowledge of the Japanese sensation who ultimately won the 1995 Rookie of the Year Award: Hideo "The Tornado" Nomo. Nomo, who earned \$35, second best among NL pitchers, went for only \$13, causing the Nowledge, who did not buy their second player until the end of Round 3, to spend the rest of the day in a trance-like state, repeating, like a mantra, "I have the Tornado, I have the Tornado...."



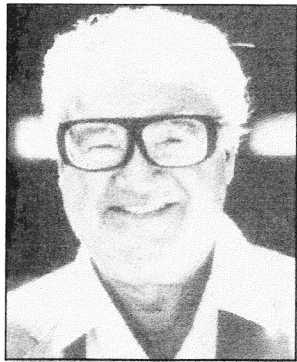
(Not really Hideo Nomo)

The busiest team in the first round was the Wrecking Crew, who bought Ken Hill, Pete Harnisch, and Darren Daulton with the fifth, sixth, and seventh picks, and generally treated the Draft as though they had a bus to catch. Crew tag-team owners Chris Benintendi and George Wilkinson, both of whom are Dinsmore & Shohl lawyers, were unable to attend the festivities, so they somehow coerced another poor soul to draft on their behalf, an associate in Dinsmore's Columbus office whom we'll call "Mr. X," mostly because it sounds cool and because we can't remember his name and didn't write it down. Aside from buying Hill, who was a complete stiff until traded to the Indians, Mr. X acquitted himself rather well, and the Crew were once again in the hunt for the money for much of the season. But other owners had to wonder about the depth and breadth of his instructions when Mr. X mentioned offhandedly that Chris and George had led him to believe that the whole draft would be over "in an hour or two." (Mr. X explained that he had mulching to tend to later in the day.) Another chuckle was had at Mr. X's expense late in Round 7, when he said "Fernando Valenzuela, \$1" and nary a soul said "\$2." But the pick wasn't too bad in retrospect: the ageless Mexican won 8 games, including 5 of his last 7 starts. And Mr. X fulfilled his primary mission, which, according to a confidential document obtained by the League Office, was to "buy Barry Larkin, at any cost, or kiss your partnership chances bye-bye." The Crew, who once froze Larkin at \$42, were able to pick him up for 1995 at \$35. Larkin, of course, wound

up being the third-best offensive player in the NL, and won his first NL MVP award.

The second round got deeply wacky when rookie owner Brett Southworth, who took over the beleaguered Patrick Division franchise during the offseason (rechristening them the Southpaws), cheerfully coughed up \$30 for rookie Atlanta reliever Brad Clontz. With the re-emergence later in June of Mark Wohlers as the Braves' closer (pronounced *closure*), Clontz finished the season with only 4 saves (although he did pick up 8 wins (6 in July!) and was generally a solid citizen in the Braves' pen). It is common knowledge throughout the LTBNL that the 'Paws owner is a close acquaintance of Kent Mercker, the lefty starter who was dealt by the Braves to the Orioles this winter. As the bidding on Clontz escalated, it became clear that Southworth had inside information that Clontz was favored by Braves' brass for the closer role. Many owners were tempted to draw a parallel to the legendary 1990 Draft Day war between the Fever and the Quags for another Atlanta reliever who never really panned out: Mike Stanton (\$25!).

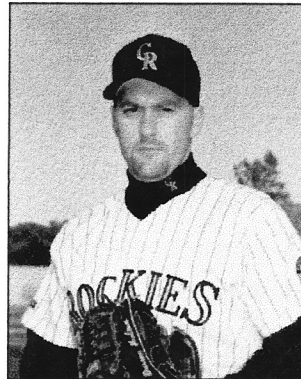
The LTBNL's fascination with promising but unproven rookies was rarely more apparent than at the beginning of Round 4, when Expos' infielder Mark Grudzielanek was nominated. Despite the fact that the Expos appeared set in their infield with Lansing, Cordero and Berry, and despite the fact that no one in the room could pronounce his name, "Mark G" wound up going for \$16, to the Underdawgs. It seemed apparent that many owners, seduced by Grudzielanek's lofty spring training stats, assumed no one else would have heard of him, and hoped to pick up a "sleeper" at a bargain price. In a league as sophisticated as the LTBNL, however, things rarely work out that way. Grudzielanek, who hit .245 with one homer, earned \$3 and a mid-season trip to Ottawa, in addition to the enmity of



Harry: "Gruzzel..., Gruddel..., aw hell!"

Harry Carry and Joe Nuxhall. Oddly, two other rookies with considerably more publicity entering the draft, the aforementioned Nomo and Carlos Perez, both went for less than Mark G and wound up being major bargains. Perez went for \$8 to the Doug Outs in Round 2, and finished with 10 wins, a 3.69 ERA and 1.203 Ratio, earning \$14. Apparently, the more hype a rookie gets, the more skeptical LTBNL owners tend to be.

Midway through Round 4, at about 2:35 p.m., the Fever nominated Rockies' reliever Darren Holmes. To the



Holmes: Cool goatee!

surprise of everyone present, the Gregory Peckers quickly and eagerly entered the bidding. The Peckers had owned Holmes his entire career, but after his regrettable 1994 season (3 saves, 6.35 ERA, 2.082 Ratio, for which performance the Peckers had the privilege of paying \$24), the Peckers swore that never again would

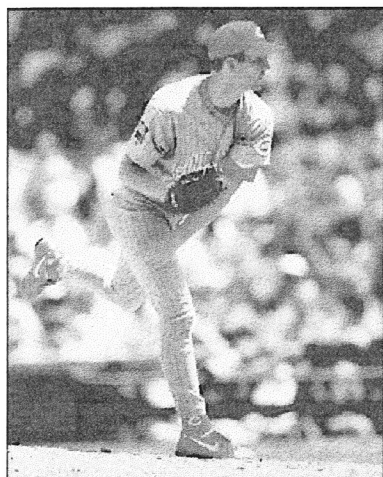
Holmes' sorry butt occupy a chair in their pen. But as the bidding increased, LTBNL owners were treated to such Pecker comments as: "He got scoped! He got his shoulder all cleaned out! He's got bite on his sinker again! *He's blowing guys away!*" Clearly, a cry for help. Ultimately, the U-Dawgs won Holmes for \$9, and he wound up having a spectacular season by his standards (6 wins, 14 saves, 3.24 ERA, 1.305 Ratio, earned \$16). The Peckers traded for him mid-season, but apparently had a change of heart and traded him away three weeks later.

Another of our favorite moments from Round 4 came when the Karnold Knowledge paid \$10 for pitcher Terry Mulholland, who was returning to the NL after a miserable year with the Yankees. He was the Giants' Opening Day pitcher, but it was downhill from there: at one point, Mulholland lost nine decisions in a row. Perusing the sports page one morning midway through the season, he saw himself referred to by a San Francisco newspaper columnist as a "pile of soot." That was apparently easy enough to deal with until the next day, when an autograph hound outside Candlestick showed his gratitude by saying, "Thanks for signing, you pile of soot." Mulholland lost again that day to go 2-10 on the year, while *lowering* his ERA to 7.06 and his Ratio to 1.835. He wound up taking a leave of absence from the team ("To sort out this 'pile of soot' thing,"), before returning to the Giants in a bullpen role. For the year, he "earned" negative \$15.

The Candy Strippers, who entered the Draft with a league-low \$54 to spend, due to pricey freezes such as Rod Beck (\$25), Larry Walker (\$36) and Matt Williams (\$39), were not heard from until late in Round 5, when they spent \$15 (28% of their Draft day budget) to buy portly Astros' lefty Greg Swindell. During the strike, it had been widely assumed that Swindell would be among the

first to cross the picket line. With that and his legendary marital difficulties behind him, he seemed to merit \$15, but alas wound up earning only \$1, with a 4.41 ERA and 1.431 Ratio. For this, the Stripers sat silent for the first two and a half hours of the Draft. Their second pick, pitcher Bobby Witt, for \$10 in Round 6, somehow managed to win only twice despite being in the Marlins' rotation most of the summer. He also earned but \$1. The worst moment of all, however, came with the Stripers' third pick, at about 4:20 p.m. The Stripers led off the seventh round by purchasing Mets' hurler Jason Jacome for \$6. In the Mets' rotation at the start of the year, Jason quickly worked his way out their plans, going 0-4 with a 10.29 ERA and 2.285 Ratio in his first five starts (including an impressive 15 BB in 21 IP), earning minus \$12. The League Office was privileged to sit next to Stripers' owner Candy "Sue" Ross at Riverfront Stadium during one of those outings. When it was called to her attention that Jacome had criticized the way Mets' manager Dallas Green had treated him, saying, "He's basically made me go through a living hell," the Stripers' GM quipped, "He should try owning himself in a Rotisserie League."

Round 7 was also notable, however, for the last two players selected: Pete Schourek by Karnold Nowledge for



Schourek: Teammates call him "Kosmo."

\$3 and Eric Young by the Green Monsters for \$8. Schourek, less than a year removed from being waived by the Mets, for gosh sakes, went 18-7 with a 3.22 ERA and 1.067 Ratio, earning \$33. He was runner-up in the Cy Young voting (first among guys not named Maddux), and was the third most valuable Rotisserie pitcher (following Maddux and Nomo). The \$30 profit turned by the Nowledge on Pete was the highest among any player bought in the Auction. Despite that, there were 27 pitchers bought for a higher price in the 1995 Draft prior to his selection. Kudos to the Nowledge for the Auction bargain of the year. Similarly, Young was the biggest bargain among hitters bought in the Auction. Unlike Schourek, Young did not have a defined starting role when the season began, but Don Baylor soon found he couldn't keep Young out of the lineup. For the season,

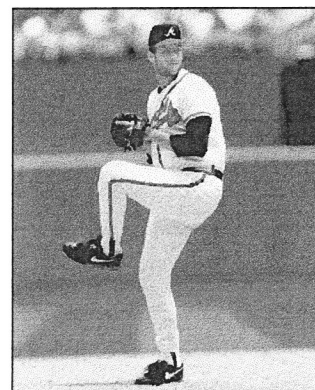
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he hit .317-6-36 with 35 steals, earning \$26 in only 366 at-bats, and providing the Monsters with an \$18 profit.

Round 8 will forever be known as the round in which Tyler Green went for \$13. The QuagMyers, who owned the Phillies' 1991 No. 1 pick over the winter, had thought seriously about freezing Green at \$10, and then found themselves bidding higher than that. The Sol Train won this mini-war, and Green looked like a bargain at \$13 early on. He was named to the All-Star team, going 8-4 with a 2.81 ERA and 1.260 Ratio prior to the break. If he had stopped there, he'd have earned \$16. But he kept pitching, and in the second half, he went 0-5 with a 10.68 ERA and 2.284 Ratio, earning negative \$28 in the second half alone. The Train finally bailed out in Week 18, waiving him to re-acquire John Ericks, and the Green Monsters claimed Green on waivers the following week. In his first start as a Monster, on September 8, Green lasted one-third of an inning, surrendering five runs.

By the time Round 9 got started, it was well past 5:00 p.m. The Wrecking Crew became the first team to complete their squad (freeing Mr. X to mulch to his heart's content) when they bought Ricky Otero. The Fever somehow snatched up the always-underestimated Jim Eisenreich for \$4 (he hit .316-10-55-10 and earned \$20), and outbid the QuagMyers for Jay Bell, the last decent middle infielder left, compelling the Quags to devote almost five minutes in Round 11 to their decision to spend \$1 on Eddie Zosky.

In Round 10, the U-Dawgs shored up their bullpen for, oh, about the next decade, buying Mark Wohlers for an unbelievable \$3. Wohlers, who was more or less unhittable once he took over from Brad Clontz as the Braves' closer in June, finished with 25 saves, a 2.09 ERA, and a 1.172 Ratio. He earned \$29 and turned the second-highest profit among players bought in the Auction. He is the early-line favorite for Best Freeze of 1996. Anyone who can figure out how he went for so little so late in the draft should contact the League Office immediately. The Show Hoffs bought Mark Carreon for \$3 with the first pick of Round 11. He hit .301-17-65, earning \$18. Carreon was a spare outfielder when the season began,



Wohlers: U-Dawg for Life?

but took over as the Giants' first baseman in May, as perennial prospect J.R. Phillips was hitting around .100.

For the season, Phillips hit 9 homers with 28 RBI, but earned only \$1, since he hit .195 in 231 AB. Think the Giants might regret, even a little, letting Will Clark go as a free agent?

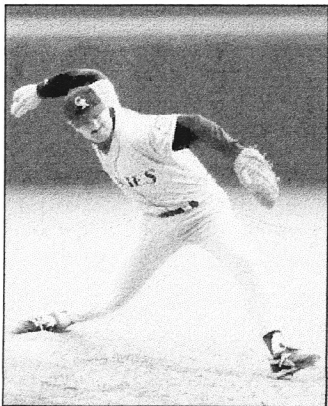
The Auction phase concluded with the usual odd-ball assortment of \$1 and \$2 picks. The last player chosen, with the only pick of Round 15, was Pirates' infielder Nelson Liriano, by the Peckers for \$1. Mr. Liriano, who is not qualified even to *tune* a banjo, somehow earned \$8. The Peckers must be very proud, as they were of their....

Perfectly legal scam in Reserve Draft!

When freeze list time rolled around last season, the Gregory Peckers held the rights to promising Astros' outfield prospect Brian L. Hunter (Not the Fat Brian Hunter) at 9A, and could have protected him as a reserve list rookie at 9B. At some point, however, the Peckers fiendishly realized that, since they held the first pick in the Reserve Draft, and since Hunter was not eligible to be purchased in the Auction, having been sent to AAA Tucson to start the season, they could *cut* Hunter altogether, and then pick him with the Reserve Round's first pick. Yes, his salary would rise from \$9 to \$12, but he would once again be an "A" player, thereby buying the Peckers another year of his services (and postponing the need to sign him to a multi-year contract). Hunter, who, it is widely thought, is the NL's answer to Kenny Lofton, was recalled on June 13 and was quickly inserted into the starting lineups of both the Astros and the Peckers. Although he missed some time with a broken hand (a common problem for Astro/Peckers; see Jeff Bagwell), Hunter hit .302 with 24 stolen bases, earning \$17, first among Reserve list hitters.

With the third pick of the first Reserve round, the Show Hoffs selected Rockies' sidearming reliever Steve Reed. We here at the League Office admit that we are still

stunned by this development, but Reed earned an amazing \$21 with a 2.14 ERA and 0.976 Ratio, despite picking up only 5 wins and 3 saves. More than anything else we can think of, this demonstrates how valuable good middle relief can be. Reed was third in the



Reed: Highest earnings in Reserve Round

NL in appearances, and had the best Ratio among NL relievers. He earned more than any other Reserve List pick. Unfortunately for the Show Hoffs, they waived Holmes before he did a lot of his best work. He was quickly snatched up by the Doug Outs on waivers.

Other valuable reserve list picks included Frank Castillo (earned \$20) by the Green Monsters, Mark Leiter (earned \$14) by the QuagMyers, and Jason Istringhausen (earned \$14) and Curtis Leskanic (earned \$17) by the Candy Stripers. Reserve picks that look very solid for 1996 and beyond include Jason Schmidt, by Dan's Fever, Alan Benes, by the U-Dawgs, Billy Wagner, by the Sol Train, and Karim Garcia, by the Southpaws.

It occurs to the League Office that, since we've already written so much about it, this might be a good time to review the concept of ...

Earnings, profits and losses

The League Office each year compiles a list of Rotisserie "earnings" by using a computer program designed and marketed by noted guru Alex Patton. Patton's formulas are designed to measure the relative values of each Rotisserie player while taking into account that there is only \$3,120 to be earned league-wide (i.e., \$260 times 12). His values have wider credibility with the League Office than others' for that reason. After calculating the amount each player "earned," the League Office compares those values to the final draft day roster of each LTBNL team to establish "profits" and "losses," or bargains and busts.

Below is a summary of each team's profits and losses, based upon *active* rosters following the Auction. Bear in mind that for many teams, the post-Auction roster was not their strongest. For example, Quilvio Veras earned \$27 between the Sol Train and the Underdaws, but he

	Pitchers			Hitters			Totals		
	\$	Sal	P/L	\$	Sal	P/L	\$	Sal	P/L
1 QuagMyers	95	89	6	174	166	8	269	255	14
2 Dan's Fever	87	103	-16	186	157	29	273	260	13
3 Gregory Peckers	69	97	-28	195	160	35	264	257	7
4 Doug Outs	73	110	-37	185	150	35	258	260	-2
5 Karnold Knowledge	70	61	9	186	199	-13	256	260	-4
6 Wrecking Crew	29	84	-55	193	162	31	222	246	-24
7 Show Hoffs	61	88	-27	173	172	1	234	260	-26
8 Candy Stripers	21	102	-81	197	156	41	218	258	-40
9 Southpaws	53	96	-43	161	164	-3	214	260	-46
10 Underdaws	62	81	-19	142	179	-37	204	260	-56
11 Green Monsters	82	92	-10	118	167	-49	200	259	-59
12 Sol Train	31	76	-45	168	183	-15	199	259	-60