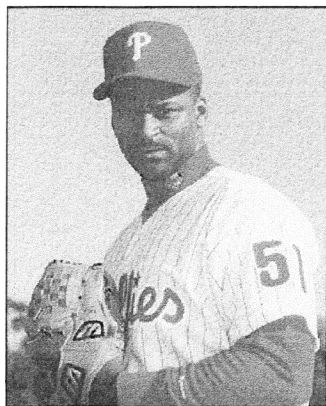


Larkin: NL MVP

The Crew finished fourth in the LTBNL in total hitting points, with 29, but had the highest season's average in hitting points, at 34.3. Their 42 hitting points in Week 6 was the highest recorded by any club all year. Leading the way were eventual NL MVP Barry Larkin (.319-15-66-51), Brian Jordan (.296-22-81-24, earned \$32), and Eric Karros (.298-32-105, earned \$32). Greg Colbrunn, whom the Crew froze at \$1B, turned a profit of \$24, fourth highest profit of the year among hitters. Pitching was another story: The Crew had the second worst pitching the LTBNL, finishing with only 14 pitching points. They suffered silently with first round Auction pick Ken Hill (cost \$30) in the early-going, not dumping him until Week 14, by which time he had been traded to the AL and a lot of damage had been done. Hill was 6-7 with a 5.06 ERA and 1.540 Ratio prior to the trade, "earning" negative \$6. The \$36 bath the Crew took on Hill was the largest loss on any player all year. A lot of the Crew's 14 pitching points were attributable to one Heathcliff Slocumb, who had 29 saves and a 2.77 ERA before the Crew dealt him to the Monsters near the end of the season for Pedro J. Martinez and Gregg Jefferies. That trade looks even better to the Crew now that Slocumb is in the American League.

What a disappointing year 1995 was for the **Green Monsters**. For the first time since they came into the LTBNL in 1990 as the League's first ever expansion franchise, the Monsters failed to finish in the money. For



Heathcliff: now the Bosox closer

those who don't remember or have tried to forget, the Monsters, known grudgingly for years as "That @\$#! New Guy," captured the LTBNL pennant in 1992, finished second in 1990, 1991, and 1993, and third in 1994. The Monsters had the highest average pitching points over the course of the year (36.9) and finished with the third-best pitching in the LTBNL, with 33 points. They finished fifth or better in each pitching

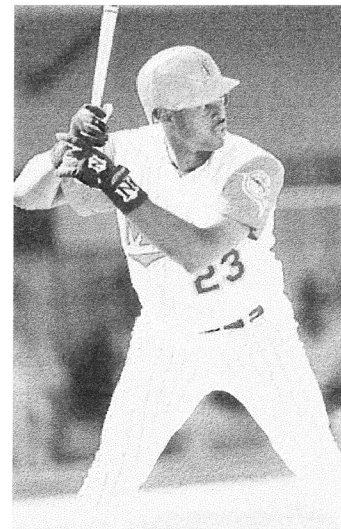
category except wins, and the Monsters often complained that their starting pitchers suffered from poor run support; they pitched well, but often failed to pick up W's. Knuckleballer Tom Candiotti was a prime example: he had the poorest run support of any pitcher in the NL, at 3.5 runs per nine IP. (Mark Portugal, the NL leader in best run support, got 6.19 runs per nine IP). On August 4 (note that this was the same day as the Bryan Rekar/Brian Williams game mentioned in the Doug Outs section), Candiotti went four innings, allowing 10 earned runs on 10 hits and 2 walks. He allowed three homers, including one to the opposing pitcher, and hit two batters. The Dodgers lost, 15-1, and Candiotti quipped, "I'm really getting ticked off at the lack of run support. If we had scored 16, we would have won." He finished the year 7-14, despite a very respectable 3.50 ERA and 1.287 Ratio, earning \$12. Pedro J. Martinez (14-10, 3.51, 1.150, earned \$24) and Denny Neagle (13-8, 3.43, 1.268, earned \$19) were also impressive. Antonio Osuna looms as a potential closer, but the Monsters must decide whether to tender a multi-year deal.

But as good as the Monsters' pitching was, their hitting was worse. It was woeful, pitiful, dismal, desolate, impotent; pick your own adjective, it wasn't any good.

At 7 total batting points for the season, they almost matched the futility of the Sol Train in 1994 (6.5). (Bear in mind, a team gets 4 points just for showing up). They finished eleventh in home runs, RBI and stolen bases, and last in batting average.

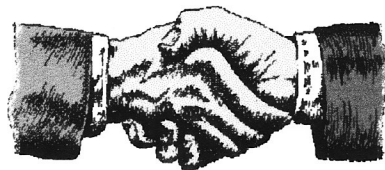
Over the whole season, the Monsters averaged 9.2 hitting points, far and away the worst in the League. The worst showing was in Week

10, when the Monsters had only 6 batting points. About the only bright spots were Marlins' rookie catcher Charles Johnson, who started very slowly but caught fire, raising his average from .142 on June 22 to .251 on September 18 (he hit .317 after the Break), and Eric Young, who earned \$26 and turned an \$18 profit, largest of any hitter bought in the Auction. Oh yeah, and Jeff King hit two home runs in one inning on August 8, becoming only the second Pirate to do so since 1894.



Johnson: Highest percentage of swings that missed (27.3%) in NL

The Underdaws, in their sophomore season in the LTBNL, were looking to improve on 1994's eighth place finish, but had a disappointing season, falling to eleventh place. The League Office has been asked to point out that immediately after the Draft, the Underdaws, as a veteran of two LTBNL Auctions, disparaged the rookie Southpaws' effort, calling it "the worst team assembled here today," a comment that surely was destined to lead to a lesson in humility. With the benefit of hindsight, the Southpaws' owner was able to point out, "At least I didn't trade Tom Henke for three days worth of Bobby Bonilla."



The U-Dawgs wish they'd never shaken on the Bonilla deal

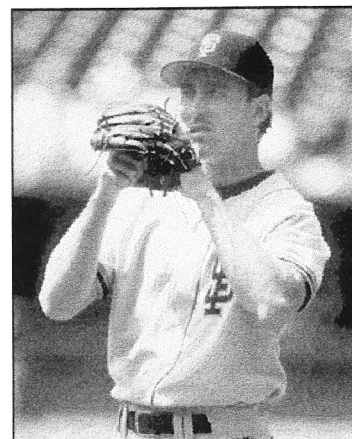
It was that kind of year for the U-Dawgs, who did indeed trade for Bonilla just three days before the Mets sent him to the Orioles for prospects. (They got 8 AB out of him, but one was a solo homer). Another bad timing incident came when the U-Dawgs called up Mike Mimbs in mid-May for a start against the Expos; to that point Mimbs had not surrendered an earned run, and had a 1.000 Ratio. Mimbs lasted one-third of an inning, giving up five runs, all earned, and six runners.

The U-Dawgs managed to provoke the only decent controversy of the year, when they traded for Moises Alou and Roger Bailey at the All-Star Break. Bailey had been on the Peckers' reserve list prior to the trade, so technically he was placed on the U-Dawgs' reserve list when the trade was completed. The U-Dawgs bid \$6 on Giants' reliever Shawn Barton, and were awarded him over another team's \$5 bid. The U-Dawgs informed the League Office that they were waiving Bailey to make room for Barton, and the League Office neglected to notice that Bailey should have been placed a reserve player. As everyone is undoubtedly aware, the FAAB rule requires that an *active* player be waived when a free agent is acquired. Ordinarily, the League Office would just have voided the transaction when it realized the impropriety -- but in this case, the team that was denied Barton had already been awarded its second choice, who of course was the first choice of another team, which had in turn been given its second choice as well. After consulting with all of the affected owners, the consensus that was reached was that somebody named Shawn Barton didn't really warrant taking extraordinary measures to void a whole series of interrelated transactions a week after the fact. This mini-scandal

came to be known as the *Barton Fink Incident*, in honor of the player who engendered it and the un-named Rotisserie owner who finked on the U-Dawgs. One owner was concerned enough about the ramifications that he sent e-mail to the League Office, suggesting that the League Office make it clear to all other owners that no precedent was being set by allowing the mistake to stand, but rather that the League Office had determined, with the consent of the owners involved, that the violation was so minor that it would be "within the best interests of the League" under "the totality of the circumstances" to allow this one erroneous transaction to stand. (Think maybe a lawyer was behind this e-mail?) The League Office, for its part, prefers simply to cite the *Golden Rule of Commissionership*, as set out in John Hunt's November 15 column in *Baseball Weekly*: "He who pisses and moans about the Commissioner's actions automatically becomes the new Commissioner."

The Underdaws peaked very early, in fifth place in Weeks 5 and 6. Their highest point total of the year, 53, came in Week 3. If there is a lesson that can be learned from the 1995 season, it is this: Don't freeze any Cubs named Steve for \$12. The U-Dawgs lost badly on Steve Trachsel (7-13, 5.15, 1.556, earned negative \$11) and Steve Buechele (.188-1-9, earned negative \$1). Bright spots included Reggie Sanders (.306-28-99-36, earned \$43), who was dealt to the Sol Train in a blockbuster deal on August 14 (the

Dawgs netted, among others, Quilvio Veras and Todd Hollandsworth), and the aforementioned Mark Wohlers. One final U-Dawg highlight: On June 13 the Dawgs acquired lifetime .186 hitter Mike Benjamin as a \$7 free agent. In his

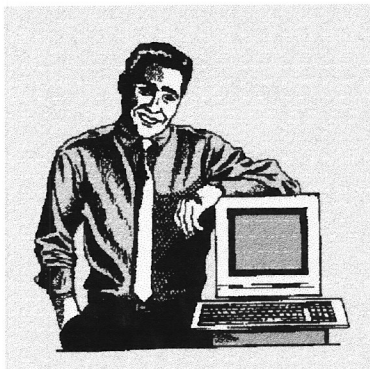


Benjamin: Three days do not a career make U-Dawgs, Benjamin went 14 for 18, setting a major league record for most hits in three consecutive games. Aside from those three games, he hit .161 for the year.

Which brings us to the *Sol Train*, a team that was a factor in the pennant race almost all year, surged to a tie for the lead in Week 15, and then completely disappeared from the face of the earth, winding up in last place for the third time in three seasons in the LTBNL. How did this happen? The Train may have had their finger on it when they sent the following e-mail message

to the League Office exactly halfway through their spectacular fall from 61 to 39.5 total points: "My team has thrown in the towel. I would like this past week documented for the season report -- my pitching staff has zero wins and one save in 35.2 innings with 39 runs and 80-some baserunners -- I don't think we can recover from the carnage." All told, the Sol Swoon encompassed the loss of 6.5 batting points and 15 pitching points. The Train were by far the coldest team at season's end: their pitching average over the last three weeks (13.2) was an amazing 9.3 points worse than their average pitching

points for the season (22.4). Ironically, the League Office is able to provide you with astonishingly insightful statistics such as this primarily due to a Trend Analysis worksheet developed by the Sol Train. The League Office had frequently expressed

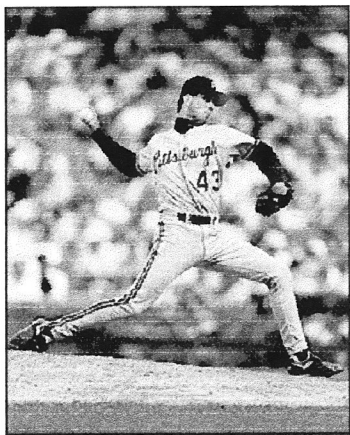


The Sol Train monitored LTBNL trends in a nifty computer program

amazement at how the Train seemed able to spot trends in the making before anyone else did, and the Train was kind enough to share this spreadsheet with the League Office, although the Train's was mysteriously and permanently deleted from their computer when things started to go wrong.

In any event, we would be remiss if we failed to point out some of the brighter spots of the Sol Train's season, which certainly included calling up Paul Wagner for his August 29 start against the Rockies.

At the time, Wagner had only 2 wins, a 5.20 ERA and 1.546 Ratio, and looked like a sure 20-game loser. He no-hit the Rockies for 8.2 innings, then picked up another win later in the week. His Ratio for the week was a Maddux-like 0.918. There was also the performance of Reggie Sanders in



Wagner: The Big Cat broke up his no-hit bid

his first game with the Sol Train on August 15: three homers and 4 RBI in his first three at-bats, all by the fourth inning. And who can forget that the Train bought

Pirates pitchers Steve Parris and John Ericks as free agents, later waived them both, then reacquired both (Parris was picked up on waivers, the Train having been the team that waived him). The Train will have Jeff Brantley (28 saves, 2.82, 1.043, earned \$28) back for another year in 1996, as well as Rico Brogna (.289-22-76, earned \$21), and probably Brian McRae (.288-12-48-27, earned \$24), and the Sol Train will always have a stable full of top prospects. Expect better things in 1996.

Now that we have thoroughly run every team's 1995 performance into the ground, here are a few final highlights, observations, and oddities, all of which fall under the category of ...

Crap that didn't fit anywhere else

The best Rotisserie players are discussed above (chart on page 7); here are the worst: The worst Rotisserie hitter was Jose Oliva of the Monsters and almost the Southpaws (.142 average in 183 AB, "earned" negative \$3). The worst Rotisserie pitcher was Willie Banks of the Wrecking Crew (2-6, 5.66, 1.809), at negative \$17. Almost all of his damage was done in the first half in the Cubs' bullpen: in a relief role, he made 10 appearances and had a 15.43 ERA. He was actually halfway-decent for the Dodgers and Marlins (15 starts, 4.22 ERA).

Biggest profits on players bought in the Auction: Pete Schourek, Nowledge (\$30 profit) was the biggest bargain among pitchers; it was Eric Young, Monsters, among hitters (\$18 profit).

Biggest Auction busts: Ken Hill, Wrecking Crew, lost \$36, nipping Terry Mulholland at \$25. The biggest bust among hitters was Marquis Grissom, Sol Train, earned only \$19, and was thus a \$31 loss.

Best freezes: It was a clean sweep for the Quags: Ismael Valdes among pitchers (\$24 profit) and Dante Bichette and Vinny Castilla (\$30 profit on each) among hitters.

Worst freezes: Another sweep! Jose Rijo of the Quags was frozen at \$35 and earned only \$2, for a \$33 loss. Among hitters, it was Cliff Floyd of the Quags, who was a \$17 loss.

Best player no one ever owned: The League Office is pretty sure it's Doug Henry, the Mets' reliever who went 3-6 with 4 saves, a 2.96 ERA and 1.090 Ratio in 51 appearances, earning \$12.

Best month by anyone not named Maddux: The League Office doesn't know of anyone who topped Hideo Nomo's June: 6-0, 0.89 ERA, 60 strikeouts in 50 IP.

Q uotes of the Year: We have several nominees. First, in the mixed metaphor division: Mets' manager Dallas Green, in late May, said that his club, which had lost five straight, had better "grab themselves by their ass and pull themselves up by their bootstraps."

Next, we have Braves' pitcher John Smoltz, who, discussing a nagging injury, was quoted as saying, "I've had the trainers working on my groin for 60,000 straight hours." (Please don't stop!)

Finally, we have the case of Dante Bichette, who on August 9 failed to back up a fly ball that center fielder Ellis Burks misplayed. The play resulted in an inside the park homer. Mr. Bichette said, "Look, I play every day. I'm not going to wear myself out running over there on a fly ball out." Bichette's manager, Don Baylor, was quoted as saying, "Dante Bichette is the least intelligent player I have ever managed, coached, or played with." Not exactly a ringing endorsement if you were a writer trying to decide for whom to cast your vote for MVP.

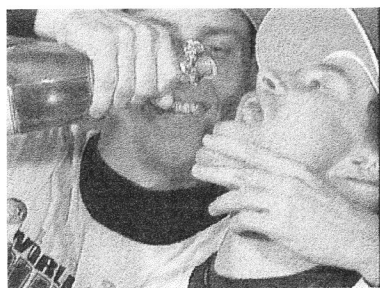
Managerial move most likely to have gotten somebody killed: Cubs' manager Jim Riggleman left reliever Bryan Hickerson twisting slowly in the wind during a 19-6 loss to the Astros on June 25. Hickerson gave up nine earned runs in the inning, all with two outs. Riggleman later claimed he thought Brian Hunter's ground ball base hit had been scored an error on Todd Zeile, and that all the runs were unearned. Riggleman apologized to Hickerson, but not his Rotisserie owners. Thankfully, there was none in our League.

Speaking of the Cubs, the award for most nightmarish box score goes to the Peckers and the Cubs-Rockies box of August 19. The Peckers had two pitchers in that game; here are their lines:

	IP	H	R	ER	B	K	Pit	ER
T Adams, Chi	1.2	6	5	4	2	1	59	8.44
Saberhagen, Col	0.1	5	7	7	2	0	37	3.96

(Saberhagen caused the Peckers quite a bit of discomfort in 1995.)

Clutch Performance of the Year: The League Office is going with Tom Glavine's masterful one-hitter of Cleveland in the final game of a great World Series. The polar opposite of that performance (and by *polar* we mean as in cold as hell) was Reggie Sanders pretty much the whole month of



October. We think his mock turtlenecks were a size or two too small.

Injury of the Year: Marlins'/Underdawgs' reliever Randy Veres bruised his pitching hand smashing a hotel room wall, trying to quiet down the couple in the next room.

We here at the League Office hate to sound bitter, but try as we might, we can't quite let go of this Strike Thing, which has now more or less savaged two perfectly good seasons. There has been no collective bargaining agreement since December 31, 1993 for crying out loud, and until very recently, the two sides had not even met face-to-face since Judge Sonia Sotomayor knocked one out of the park last March. If you're scoring at home (or even if you're by yourself) the tally is now: One cancelled World Series, two abbreviated seasons, one 48-year old witch doctor pitcher appearing in spring training games, one federal mediator, appointed by the President, who was completely befuddled by the issues, a 20% dropoff in attendance, and a 25% dropoff in merchandise sales. Maybe the defining moment of the silliness was when Reds' GM Jim "Jimmy the Weasel" Bowden breathlessly announced, just before the Replacement Grapefruit League Opener, that he had acquired five players from Cleveland, in a trade for, well, nobody. (Imagine how this trade would have gone over had it occurred in the LTBNL!)

And while there have been a few signs that the players and the owners are finally starting to get it, that we may actually have a season without a work stoppage, and that there might be a deal later this year, the maddening thing is that both sides still seem to have other priorities. Like taking out full page ads to "educate" the public as to their position, or cranking up another round of expansion (have there ever been two lamer team names than "Diamondbacks" and "Devil Rays"?). Or changing the strike zone, or making new network television mega-deals, or, worst of all (aarrghhh!) Interleague Play. And when it seemed like baseball's popularity had reached its lowest ebb, the marketing guys came up with this:



Oh boy. That ought to get the kids excited about baseball again! Maybe the owners should have considered these suggestions from David Letterman (5/8/95):

Top 10 Ways Major League Baseball Can Win Back the Fans

- 10 New rule: Catch a foul ball, win the salary of the guy who hit it.
- 9 All players must squat like a catcher for the entire game.
- 8 Remember Babe Ruth? Well, how about some more ball-playin' fat dudes?
- 7 Instead of the National Anthem, sing "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" before each game.
- 6 Each team must have at least one player named "Mookie."
- 5 At the end of bat night, fans get to beat the crap out of the home team.
- 4 For just \$3 over the regular ticket price, you get to "do it" with the Phillie Phanatic.
- 3 Make it legal for players to cork their pants.
- 2 Goodbye boring baseball caps, hello festive Sombreros.
- 1 Nine players, eight uniforms.

(Warning to technophobes: The next section contains numerous references to the so-called "Information Superhighway.")

Rotisserie on-line!

We would be hard-pressed to wrap up this Newsletter without mentioning, however briefly, one of the most significant developments of 1995: the remarkable proliferation of baseball- and Rotisserie-specific information on the Internet. In 1995 several cutting-edge owners ventured on-line and found a wealth of information useful for improving their teams and staying ahead of the competition. 1996 promises to be even more exciting. For one thing, the technology exists such that the League Office can post the standings reports on-line, allowing individual owners to retrieve them via e-mail at their own convenience. For another, there are now hundreds of baseball sites of interest on the Web, including news services with stories, instant or partial box scores, transactions, rumors, you name it. There are official and unofficial team pages that will have statistics, press releases, injury reports, transactions, rumors, and the like (including, for example, many of the photos reproduced in this Newsletter). We're listing here a few sites at which you can point your browser. As you might expect, the ESPN and USA Today sites have statistics, stories, and box scores available soon after games are complete. The Instant Sports site has partial box scores from STATS, Inc., updated batter-by-batter. (You can check box scores even if you go to bed before the games are over.) Skilton Baseball Links (the one that says pc-professor) has links to something like 700

baseball-related sites. Addresses change pretty frequently, so not all of these are guaranteed to work.

<http://espnet.sportszone.com/mlb/>
<http://www.usatoday.com/sports/baseball/sb.htm>
<http://www.usatoday.com/sports/baseball/newwebpg.htm>
<http://www.pc-professor.com/baseball/>
<http://instantsports.com/baseball/>
<http://www.fastball.com>
<http://www.majorleaguebaseball.com/mlb/>
<http://atlantabraves.com>
<http://www.rmii.com/rockies>
<http://pwr.com/marlins/default.html>
<http://www.stlcardinals.com/index.html>
<http://sfgiants.com/sfgiants>
[http://oit-unix.umass.edu/~summers/patton\\$/index.html](http://oit-unix.umass.edu/~summers/patton$/index.html)

1995 Financial Report

All that remains is to review the LTBNL financial picture for 1995. A copy of the familiar who-owes-what spreadsheet is attached. Assuming everyone pays up, gross receipts should be \$1,212.10, which would be a new record. Expenses will be around \$200 (software upgrade, stats downloads, and phone charges for faxes and data transfers). The nice round number that is left, \$1,000.00, would be divided among the four money-winners in the usual fashion: 50%-25%-15%-10%. Congratulations again to all the winners; if everyone cooperates, we hope to have you paid shortly. As always, in the interest of fairness to last year's winners, we ask that all owners be prepared to settle up for last year on Auction Draft Day, and that they also pay a deposit of \$50 toward 1996 fees.

That's it!

If you've made it this far, thanks. We hope you enjoyed this year's Newsletter, which was (obviously) months in the making; sorry it took so long to get it to you. Thanks to everyone who contributed ideas, and especially to Scott for the trend analysis spreadsheet. If you loved it or hated it, give the League Office a call; we'd love to hear your thoughts, comments, criticisms, or death threats. Please get your freeze lists to the League Office by midnight on **Monday, March 25**. The League Office, as always, will distribute a summary of all teams' freezes the following day. Remember that you must specifically inform the League Office of any multi-year signings or Reserve list rookie renewals. If you need a rules refresher or just want to talk Rotisserie, give the League Office a call. It's been a long winter and we're ready to get fired up again.