



League News *October 2002*

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And then there were four...

The ALCS has its matchup. The invited are the Cutters from Moline and the Cook County Maulers. This should be an epic showdown. Both teams have very good offenses and pitching staffs. If one or the other wins it before the seventh game I'd be surprised.

The Cutters reached the ALCS after cruising past Toledo. The Cutters swept the series winning the games 9-1, 5-3, 12-2 and 7-4 to clinch. In game one Curt Schilling whiffed 12 batters while in game two Chan Ho Park stepped it up and struck out 13 hitters. In the game four clincher the Mudhens did force the Cutters to go ten innings before succumbing. Barry Bonds' two run blast off of Woody Williams was the finishing blow. Bret Boone contributed four ribbies. **Series MVP: Barry Bonds.**

The Maulers advanced to another ALCS by also sweeping their Semi-final opponents, the Georgia Braves. The Maulers outscored the Braves 20-3 in the four games and two of those runs Georgia scored in the first game. Pedro Martinez and Roger Clemens were phenomenal on the mound in games 1 and 2. Jeff Bagwell drove in six runs in the four games. **Series MVP: Desi Relaford.**

The Braves had won the wild card series over the Hessville Everreadys in what has been the best series of the playoffs so far. Hessville won the first two games, but the Braves charged back to win the next three at home and thus head back to Hessville up 3 games to 2. In the sixth game the 'Readys were on the verge of elimination as they went to the bottom of the ninth down 3-2. Keith Foulke got the first two batters of the inning to inch the Braves oh so close to victory. But then Jose Vidro singled and Matt Williams followed with a base hit of his own. With two men on base up stepped MVP candidate Larry Walker. Walker smacked a double to tie the game. Jason Giambi was next and was walked intentionally and loaded the bases. Edgar Martinez followed and Gar worked out a walk to plate the winning run. In game seven the Braves won this stunning series 5-1. Jose Hernandez' two run dinger in the fifth gave the Braves the lead they would never relinquish. **Series co-MVP's: Jose Hernandez and Russ Ortiz.**

Over in the NL the defending champs from Ocala will find themselves facing the Stanley Sioux again.

For the third straight post-season the Ocelots squared off against the Glen Allen Mets. The Ocelots comfortably moved on as they won the series 4-1. Triple Crown winner Sammy Sosa was walked 10 times in the five games. Brian Giles contributed 3 homers and 8 ribbies. J.D. Drew hit .500. Trot

Nixon did all he could for the Mets as he hit .412 with 4 homers and 7 runs driven in. **Series MVP: J.D. Drew.**

Stanley made it to the NLCS again on the strength of Randy Johnson and an offense that battered around the Buckeyes. Two times the Sioux scored nine runs (both started by The Unit). In the final two games of the series Columbus was outscored 15-1. Randy Johnson threw two complete games in the series, striking out 11 batters in Game 1 and then getting 12 more in Game 4. Jermaine Dye hit .522 with 6 ribbies. Neifi Perez of all players actually plated seven teammates. Carlos Beltran drove in six runners for Columbus. **Series MVP: Randy Johnson.**

The Buckeyes had moved on after they impressively took out the Bees in five games. Bloomington had backed into the playoffs with a playoff game win over Fleetwood (please see Joal's game story in the Articles section). The Bees then proceeded to split the first two games in Columbus and were headed back to The Hive in good shape. But in game three The Buckeyes blasted Bee ace Mark Buehrle for eight runs. In the game five finale a Kevin Millar Grand Slam was the BIG hit that gave the Buckeyes the road sweep. Preston Wilson hit .583 for the Bees. Carlos Beltran and Millar each drove in six runs during the series. **Series MVP: Bobby Higginson.**

Good luck to the four teams left.

BRASSball Awards handed out

For the eighth off-season BRASSball mangers honored some of its finest players for their stellar contributions. Moline and Ocala had two players each honored with awards. Here are the Top Five in the categories...

AL MVP						
Player	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	5 TH	TOTAL
Barry Bonds, MOL	5	3	3	1	0	89
Magglio Ordonez, IOWA	2	3	2	3	1	61
Rich Aurilia, CC	3	1	2	3	0	56
Curt Schilling, MOL	2	0	1	0	0	25
Larry Walker, HES	0	2	0	3	0	17

NL MVP						
Player	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	5 TH	TOTAL
Sammy Sosa, OCA	11	0	0	0	0	110
Todd Helton, OCA	0	9	1	0	1	69
Lance Berkman, CHA	1	1	2	1	2	32
Albert Pujols, GA	0	0	3	1	1	19
Jeff Kent, STA	0	0	3	0	2	17
Shawn Green, OCA	0	0	2	2	1	17

AL CY						
Player	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	5 TH	TOTAL
Curt Schilling, MOL	11	1	0	0	0	117
Tom Gordon, HES	1	5	3	0	1	61
Matt Morris, MIN	0	1	6	4	0	49
Roger Clemens, CC	0	5	1	1	1	44
Russ Ortiz, GEO	0	0	1	2	2	17
Jeff Zimmerman, MOL	0	0	1	2	2	17

NL CY						
Player	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	5 TH	TOTAL
Javier Vazquez, OCA	6	4	1	0	0	93
Randy Johnson, STA	4	3	4	1	0	84
Mark Buehrle, BLO	1	4	5	2	0	69
John Smoltz, NG	0	1	1	3	1	22
Roy Oswalt, OCA	1	0	0	1	2	15

AL ROY						
Player	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	5 TH	TOTAL
Wade Miller, GEO	9	0	1	0	1	96
Juan Pierre, BRO	1	3	4	2	0	57
Geoff Blum, SB	2	0	3	3	2	46
Byun Hyung Kim, SB	0	3	2	1	4	38
AJ Pierzynski, GEO	0	2	1	3	2	30

NL ROY						
Player	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	5 TH	TOTAL
Albert Pujols, GA	4	4	3	0	0	83
Ichiro, BLO	4	1	3	1	0	65
Mark Buehrle, BLO	2	4	0	0	1	49
Roy Oswalt, OCA	2	1	2	2	2	45
J.D. Drew, OCA	0	1	2	1	2	22

BRASSball votes to make changes

Our managers have voted to make only three changes to BRASSball for next season. Proposal #5 passed. This pertained to having to notify the league statistician of players you want on your roster if you have more players than the game can handle. Proposal #9 also passed. This proposal now means the deadline for declaring which AM's you desire to retain has been moved up to October 25th. The final proposal to pass was #10. This means we now have a playoff schedule in BRASSball. The playoff schedule will be distributed as part of the League Schedule. Here is how the votes broke down on each ballot item:

Issue #1: Failed, 19-5

Issue #4: Failed, 14-10

Issue #7: Failed, 13-11

Issue #10: Passed, 18-6

Issue #2: Failed, 20-4

Issue #5: Passed, 18-6

Issue #8: Failed, 15-9

Issue #3: Failed, 17-7

Issue #6: Failed, 13-11

Issue #9: Passed, 17-7

Free Agency

On November 1st Robert Smith will be distributing the lists of all the free agents available for our shopping pleasure. Bids are due back to Robert by Wednesday November 27th. I expect all of you to be as helpful and responsive to Robert's first free agency as you have been for me the past three years. Free Agency has reached a nice flow. I expect this to continue as I've been helping Robert get ready as best I can.

As we all know last year we enacted a new salary structure in BRASSball. This pays players annually rather than in the previously used lump sum manner. Part of this change returned all outstanding

contractual payments with it understood that this money is actually still owed to players. For this reason please keep in mind your bank accounts during free agency. Now more than ever a BRASSball manager must understand his financial picture. While many of us have over \$40,000,000 to spend this off-season, to do so would be financial suicide. While a team can indeed go over \$35,000,000 in annual payments, please make sure you are able to do it within reason. Don't leave yourself without a safety net. Players get injured, prospects one may be counting on in the future don't quite play as much as hoped and then all of a sudden you have little room for error in the next off-season.

Corey designed the roster sheets to be interactive and helpful. While formulating your bids on players please do this, as it is quite informative. Plug in players and the contracts you want to sign them to into Corey's spreadsheet and not only will you see how it affects your current situation but also your future. I've done this and you gain a much better picture of what you may be able to do during free agency.

This section is not intended to be a lecture, but rather informative. Thanks to Corey we all have a very helpful tool at our disposal. The managers who also play in BRASS have been through this system now for a few seasons and are acclimated to it, but to the BRASSball only guys this is still quite new. Please do your financial homework while assembling your bids.

Good luck to all! The quality of players available is probably the best the league has ever seen.

Raw Draft Order

Here is the up-to-date status of the draft order.

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|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Metropolis | 7. Springfield | 13. Iowa | 19. Columbus |
| 2. Plaza | 8. La Crosse-* | 14. Minnesota | 20. Georgia |
| 3. Santa Barbara-* | 9. Racine-* | 15. Bloomington | 21. TBD |
| 4. Box City-* | 10. Brooklyn | 16. Hessville | 22. TBD |
| 5. Charlevoix | 11. Gem City | 17. Glen Allen | 23. TBD |
| 6. North Georgia | 12. Fleetwood | 18. Toledo | 24. BRASSball Champ |

* indicates these two teams tied and will alternate their positions in each round.

Trades

1. Minnesota trades Jose Cabrera to Toledo for Rich Rodriguez.
2. Minnesota trades Ramon E. Martinez to Ocala for Columbus' 2003 4th round draft choice.
3. Box City trades Adrian Brown, John Halama and Orlando Hernandez to Toledo for Jerrod Riggan, Toledo's 2003 bonus round draft choice and \$500,000.
4. La Crosse trades Eric Chavez to Metropolis for Jason Marquis, Mike Restovich, Matt Kinney and Metropolis' 2002 2nd round draft choice.
5. Brooklyn trades Kevin Appier to Minnesota for Josh Fogg.

Upcoming League Deadlines

November 1st Robert sends out free agent packet

November 27th Free Agent bids due to Robert

Next Issue of League News

A Champion is crowned!

Articles

Below is Joal's recap of the one game playoff for the last NL playoff spot.

After finishing the regular schedule with identical 85-77 win seasons, Bloomington and Fleetwood faced off in a one-game playoff to decide which team would move on to the playoffs.

Starting for Bloomington was ace LHP Mark Buerhle. Facing this rookie for Fleetwood was veteran LHP Al Leiter. Given the fine performances of both pitchers throughout the season, a fine game appeared to be in order.

While neither pitcher had his best stuff on the day, both got key outs when necessary and battled into the seventh inning.

In the bottom of the seventh, Fleetwood took a 4-3 lead thanks to an RBI single from LF Shannon Stewart and a solo HR from SS Jeff Reboulet. Had Stewart not been picked off by Jesus Colome, though, Reboulet's home run in the next at-bat would have scored two. Still, though, Fleetwood had earned a one-run lead.

The eighth inning proved uneventful, with relievers Derek Lowe and Steve Karsay pitching scoreless frames for both Fleetwood and Bloomington respectively.

In the top of the ninth, Vinny Castilla greeted Lowe with a lead-off double. Pinch-runner Willie Harris immediately entered the game for Castilla.

Fleetwood called on Dan Plesac to face 2B Marlon Anderson. Anderson came through for the Bees, though, with an infield single and Bloomington had runners on 1st and 3rd with no outs.

Bloomington, now with the go-ahead run on 1st, had utilized the stolen base to its advantage all season. Now it would attempt to do so again and put the go-ahead run into scoring position at second.

Fleetwood's strong-armed catcher Mike Redmond (given a rare start against the speedy Bees) had other ideas, though, and gunned Anderson out at second base! Bloomington still had the tying run on 3rd, but now with one out.

Recognizing the crucial at-bat, Fleetwood brought in Esteban Yan and Bloomington countered with pinch-hitter Roger Cedeno. Cedeno came through for Bloomington, hitting a sacrifice fly to score the tying run. The game now headed into the bottom of the ninth.

Shannon Stewart, trying to atone for his earlier pickoff, lead off the frame against Karsay with a walk. He then stole second, putting the winning run on second base for Fleetwood with nobody out! And following a Damion Easley sacrifice bunt, the speedy Stewart stood on third base for Fleetwood with only one out.

At this crucial point, Karsay--wanting nothing to do with Chipper Jones--issued an intentional walk. In addition to not letting Fleetwood's star swing the bat, this move also set-up a possible double-play for Bloomington.

Fleetwood sent up pinch-hitter Bruce Aven, who simply needed to loft a medium-deep flyball to earn the Fleetwood win. Again, though, Karsay was up to the challenge and struck out Aven.

With Jim Edmonds due, Bloomington now brought in LHP Juan Moreno. Edmonds was only able to muster a lazy flyout, though, and the threat was over...Bloomington had dodged the bullet!

In the top of the 10th, Ichiro Suzuki lead off with a single. Fleetwood then brought in Ramiro Mendoza to face Craig Counsell. Counsell laid down a perfect sacrifice bunt, putting Ichiro at second with one out.

Bloomington's star slugger Juan Gonzalez was up next. Although first base was open, Fleetwood pitched away. Gonzalez was only able to fly out, though, and Preston Wilson stepped to the plate.

Again, first base was open. But on-deck was Matt LeCroy, who enjoyed a stellar offensive season in very limited at-bats. Fleetwood once again pitched away, then.

This time Bloomington's luck improved, and Wilson smashed an RBI single to LF. Bloomington would now enter the bottom of the tenth with a one-run lead of its own!

Bloomington sent its flame-throwing closer Armando Benitez to the mound for the crucial save. Fleetwood countered with PH Calvin Pickering. Benitez threw a 98-mph fastball by Pickering, though, for a strikeout.

Stepping in next for Fleetwood was pinch-hitter Raul Ibanez. Ibanez could only manage a groundball out, and now there were two away.

Down to its last bullet, Fleetwood sent up another pinch-hitter...this time in the form of Jorge Posada. Benitez would not be denied on this day, though, and retired Posada on a flyball to centerfield.

The amazing game was over, and Bloomington had emerged victorious. Winning in relief for the Bees was Juan Moreno, while Esteban Yan was saddled with the loss for Fleetwood. The game's MVP honors went to spark-plug Craig Counsell (3-4, 3B, 3 RBI).

Bloomington now faces Stanley in the ALDS, while Fleetwood licks its wounds and looks forward to better luck in 2003.

Good luck to all remaining teams! May your playoff games be as exciting as this one was.

-JOAL-