

The Press Box

By Lenny Luchtefeld
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Long Island takes the East title.

Ocala finishes on top in the West.

Bloomington wins going away.

North Georgia and Stanley make it to the Wildcard series.

Playoffs Get Underway

The playoffs are set to begin. Congratulations to the teams that made the post season. The teams have been notified and the games will begin as soon as possible. The first series of the playoffs will be between the 2 wildcards. North Georgia will have home field advantage over Stanley in the series. There are considered to be two rest days between the final day of the regular season and the beginning of the Wildcard round. The division winners have a bye during the Wildcard round and as such, will be completely rested for their initial series.

After the completion of the Wildcard round, the Second Round Playoff Series match-ups in each league are as follows: *Remaining playoff team with worst winning % @ Division Winner with best record, and remaining playoff team with 3rd best record @ remaining playoff team with 2nd best record.*

The League Championship and World Series match-ups are as follows: *the team with the best record hosts the other team, except that a wildcard team can never host a series, unless two wildcard teams make the World Series.* All series are 7-game series and are conducted using the 2-3-2 format.

The winner of the Wildcard round will be taking on the powerful Bloomington Bees. The Bees will have home field advantage all through the National League playoffs. Long Island will be on the road to start against the speedy Ocala. I will keep you posted on all match-ups as they happen. I will also publish a full report in the next newsletter as to all the playoff activities to date. Good luck to all the teams.

Final Team Summaries

NL East

Long Island (93-69) The Tigers gained their 4th title in 5 years. Three times they have made it to the World Series but always coming up short. Is this our version of the Bridesmaid and never a Bride? Box City, St. Lucie and Cook County have all taken the crown from the Long Island team. This year the rest of the division didn't have the guns

to stay with the Tigers. They won the division by a whopping 26 games. They started the season out of the gate slowly but have gained pace and seem to be at their peak at just the right time, playoff time.

Olerud paced the Tigers this year. He batted .337 with 26 homers and 139 RBI's. Frank Thomas was the team leader in homers with 29 but was a disappointment in the average department, only hitting .263. On the pitching side, Hoffman was almost perfect. He saved 41 games, won 3 more and posted a 0.99 ERA. Kerry Wood turned in a fine season for the Tigers going 13-7 with a 3.45 ERA. He also struckout 230 batters in 177 innings.

Glen Allen (67-95) The Mets and the Wizards finished in a tie for 2nd place in the division this year. They took a small step backwards this year. Last year, their first year, they won 81 games and finished at .500. After Long Island, the whole division was down this year. This team should improve next year with help from Visquel, Lopez, Klesco, Tatis and Karros. The pitching will need the most help. Behind Nagy, Hernandez and Hamilton, not much else is in the cupboard. Newcomer Eric Milton should make up for the loss of Jimmy Key.

Visquel was the team's potential MVP as he batted .299, stole 31 bases and only committed 6 errors. Lopez lead the team in homers with 26 and RBI's with 88 but batted a disappointing .267. On the pitching side, R. Hernandez saves 31 games and turned in a 3.57 ERA. Nagy lead the team in victories with 12. No other pitcher won more than 8 games.

Wauwatosa (67-95) A year ago the Wizard were riding high in the saddle. They had just won the Wildcard spot and only finished 2 games behind Long Island for first place. They won 102 games and were headed for the playoffs. Unfortunately, they had to face Bloomington who won 127 games and was a major powerhouse. Funny thing happened on the way to the playoffs, they beat the Bees 4 games to 2 to advance. What a rush! They did lose out to the Tigers in the next round but they had made to the playoffs for the first time. They put all their chips down banking on last year and this year they had to pay the price with only 67 wins. I'm sure it was all worth it.

Todd Walker was the star for the Wizards this year. He batted .294 with 10 homers, 80 RBI's and 20 steals. Burnitz smashed 43 homers and drove in 111 runs but batted a woeful .229. Dennis Martinez was the bullpen ace saving 18 games, winning 9 and adding a 3.05 ERA in his final year before retirement.

Racine (57-101) Another disappointing year for the Heat. A last place finish and a decline in wins from a year ago. Last year they won 69 games and were only a step or 2 from being a .500 team. In years past, they have been a good offensive team with poor pitching. This year they reversed that trend and had much better pitching than offense. The team turned in an ERA of 4.41 but the team batted only .245.

David Segui, who came over in a mid season trade from Box City, was their best offensive player. He hit .306 with 9 homers and 51 RBI's in 97 games. Lofton was also in the mix with 10 triples and 34 steals but only batted .245. The closer role seemed to be by committee as 9 players got saves. Osuna got the bulk of them with 11. Mike

Mussina, Juan Guzman and Yoshi were the mainstays of the staff but none of them won more than 8 games.

NL Central

Bloomington (108-54) The Bees win their 3rd division title in a row. In 1997 they won it all, taking the BRASSball championship. In 1998 they won 127 games only to be beaten out by the Wizards in round one. Will 1999 be their year again to win it all? Can anyone stop this group of killer Bees?

Bloomington finished with the best record in the NL this year with 108 victories. Anytime you win that many games you got to have some players put up some big numbers. The Bees have 3 potential Cy Young winners in Maddux, Martinez and Clemens. Clemens probably has the best shot as he posted a 25-5 record with a 2.84 ERA. Shaw saved 46 games for the Bees this year. On the offensive side, McGwire smashed 68 homers and drove in 173 while batting .295. McGwire could be the league MVP with those kind of numbers. His counterpart from the other side of the plate was Palmeiro who hit 45 homers with 141 RBI's and turned in a .303 average.

Stanley (81-81) A .500 record made the second spot in the Wildcard portion of the playoffs. Stanley finished 3rd last year with 60 victories and improved this year to 81, a 21 game increase. A couple of late season acquisitions helped them get into the playoffs. Greg Vaughn and Jamie Moyer came over in trades and made a big difference. Vaughn smashed 19 homers in just over 220 PA's to add a formidable power hitter to the lineup. Moyer added pitching strength going 6-3 in 13 starts.

Caminiti hit 34 dingers with 90 RBI's but batted a mere .240. D. Lewis led the team in hitting with a .277 average. Helling was the team's best pitcher winning 16 and losing 9 with a 4.20 ERA. The closer role was shared by 2 men this year. Spradlin saved 13 games and turned in a sparkling 1.72 ERA. Mike Trombley chipped in with 17 saves.

Columbus (75-87) The Buckeyes just missed the playoffs this year. They were in the driver's seat until the final 2 months when the wheels fell off. A trade or 2 might have made a difference. Another right handed starter or a player in the middle of the lineup might have been big. It's hard to win in Strat leagues with 3 lefty starters, even if they are very good.

Jordan and Higginson paced the offense. Jordan batted .334 to lead the team and was a 20-20 man. He hit 20 homers and stole 20 bases and knocked in 106 runs. Higginson was also very solid batting .331 with 17 homers and 91 RBI's. Henry Rodriguez smacked 31 homers and drove in 97 while playing very well in the outfield only committing 1 error. The Buckeyes used the closer by committee as 7 pitchers saved games for them this year. Three pitchers won 10 or more games for them. Sirotko was the leader, winning 16 games for a team with 75 wins and a team ERA of 4.47.

River Bend (63-99) Wounded and left for dead after their manager left them because of time commitments after 2 months, the Blackhawks let Hal run the team for the final 4 months. Hal's not the smartest guys in the world but he shows up for work every day. The team has now been righted. Joal Kjarsgaard, who was co-managing the Metropolis team, has now taken over as manager. This is a team with several talented players.

Sheffield, Abreu, Everett, Chipper Jones and Easley head up the offense. Pitching will be the first thing Joal will need to work on, as Rivera and L. Hernandez are the only real commodities here. Do I smell a trade in the winds?

Sheffield led the team in hitting with a .316 average. Jones pounded 39 homers and drove in 104. This was an off year for Abreu batting .291 but he is going to be a star. Rivera saved 25 games for a team with only 63 wins. Oquist lead the team in wins with 13 and added a fine ERA of 4.59.

NL West

Ocala (93-69) Ocala goes from worst to first. Their first of what could be many division titles. At the end of last year we knew one of these years the Ocelots would be a force and this was the year. 1998 they only managed 57 wins. This year 93 wins, a 36 game swing. Free agents, excellent trading, a good draft and some young prospects that came into their own made the difference this year.

Scott Brousius led the team in hitting with a .314 average. Derek Bell was probably the teams MVP as he paced the team in doubles (57), homers (25) and RBI's with 117 while hitting .308. The Ocelots stole 227 bases with Stewart getting 98 of them. Not a great deal of power with this team but a definite bunch or Roadrunners. On the pitching side, Rogers was the man. He went 20-5 with a 2.55 ERA. The teams Cy Young and maybe the whole leagues. Stottlemyre and Perez both chipped in with 17 victories each and Mercir won 10 out of the bullpen and saved 34 more.

North Georgia (83-79) The Yellow jacket won more games last year (85) but didn't make the playoffs. This year they are one of the Wildcard entrants. This will be their first time in the playoffs and they are pumped! As the playoffs will soon be in full swing, they will be matched up and at home to start the playoffs against the Stanley Sioux.

The Yellow Jackets finished with a team batting average of .273 and an ERA of 4.52. Hamilton led the team in hitting with a .308 mark and right behind him was Jeter at .306. Jeff King led the team in homers (22) and RBI's (89) but hit a disappointing .238. If hitting .300 is an off year then Gwynn had one, hitting only .301. Shane Reynolds was the dominant starter for North Georgia gaining 16 wins to go with a 3.62 ERA. Christiansen saved 38 games and had a 2.45 ERA.

Gem City (79-83) The Wolfpack made a surge at the very end of the year to get into the playoffs but came up just short. They finished 2 games behind Stanley for the final Wildcard spot. They had a fine offense but the pitching let them down. The team batted .280 but the pitching turned in a 5.14 ERA. If Cone and Radke, who didn't produce as expected, had turned in better years who knows what could have happen. Gem City did trade away Canseco earlier in the year and that also hurt their chances. This team only won 50 games last year as the team was trading for the future. The results are in: a 29 game improvement this year and more to follow next year. This is a team full of offensive talent. Next year should be a fine year with Bagwell, Thome, Sanders, Womack Grissom and I. Rodriquez leading the way.

Bagwell was the teams potential MVP. He batted .325 with 47 homers and 140 RBI's. Cone and Radke only won 26 games between them and their ERA's were 4.45 and 5.17.

Percival was the most stable pitcher winning 5 games, saving 30 more and turning a 2.88 ERA.

Metropolis (55-107) The fire sale is over for this year and we'll see what the Avengers have for the future. Gone are Galarraga, Wells, Lightenberg and Cordova. Added are Hentgen, Byrd, Bere, Bergeron, McGriff and some early round picks. Still around to add to this are W. Clark, M. Clark, S. Finley, Fryman and Gant. Next year may not be the year but the future is closer than it was. I forgot to mention Metropolis will have another subtraction next year. They will only have half the brain power. Joal will not be around to help Andy has he taken over the Riverbend team.

Will Clark is the MVP of the Avengers this year as he hit .277 with 18 homers and 87 RBI's. No pitcher won more than 9 games for the team this year. Mark Clark won 9 posting a 4.58 ERA. Lightenberg saved 10 games before being shipped off to Long Island.

Trades

Ocala sends Orlando Cabrera to **Columbus** for Mexicali's 1st Round Draft Pick.

Contract Signings

Bloomington signs Mantei (1,A3), Seanez (1,A1), Batista, J. (M0), Suzuki (M0), Miller, T. (M0), Anderson, Mar. (M0), Wilson, Pr. (M0).

Ocala signs Paul Konerko to a 5-year contract, Juan Encarnacion to a 4-year contract, Javier Vazquez to a 4-year contract, JD Drew to a MO contract, Orlando Cabrera to a MO contract, Jim Abbott to a MO contract.

Glen Allen signs Lance Painter to a 1A2 and Damian Jackson to a 1A2. Mahay, Spencer and Lennon to MO contracts.

Long Island signs Baughman, Frank, Garcia, Guillen, Rivera and Powell to MO contracts.

Stanley signs F. Rodriguez, N. Rodriguez, Thurman and Woodard, Jermaine Dye, Tom Evans, Jeremy Giambi, Abraham Nunez and Aramis Ramirez to MO contracts.

Columbus signs C. Beltran to 7 years, R. Hidalgo to 4 years, D. Sadler (MO), and C. Loewer (MO) contracts.

Gem City signs Parque 3 years, Rekar: 2 years and Coppinger and Ludwick to MO contracts.

Riverbend signs Ricky Ledee to 3 years, Manny Aybar to an MA contract, A. Beltre, and Pozo to a MO contracts.

Wauwatosa signs Cloude to a 1 year contract and Elarton, Howry, Washburn and Dar. Veras to MO contracts and Karsay, Morman and Ro.Myers to MA contracts.

North Georgia signs Polanco to a 2 yr contract.

Roster Cuts

Glen Allen cuts G. McCarthy and R. Butler.

Ocala cuts Brian Powell, Trey Moore.

Long Island cuts Wilson, Wagner and Casanova.

Bloomington cuts Scarborough Green.

Stanley cuts Emil Brown and Mike Johnson.

Columbus cuts M. Valdez and D. Jackson.

Gem City cuts Brito.

Riverbend cuts Felix Martinez: and Billy McMillon.

North Georgia cuts Pavlik and Franklin.

Racine cuts Serafini and Marzano.

Rules Proposals

I just wanted to take a moment to get you to start thinking about any new ideas you might have for the league. Kevin and I will be looking for any new rules changes that any manager would like to make. These rule changes should be something that will improve the realism of our hobby. It could also be an idea to make the games more enjoyable or fun.

Every year we need to seek the league's input when rules or programs need to be changed. If you have a rule change proposal please submit it or any ideas about the league that are a prospect for change. Please submit your rule change proposals in the form of a yes or no question. I.E. should we change to allow the Strat-O-Matic closer rule? Any proposals should be submitted by October 25th to your LD.

I know that some people have been thinking along this direction already because I have 2 new proposals to vote on when the time comes. Kevin and I will also add some new proposals to help the league stay competitive and fun.

New Riverbend Owner

Andy Wiesner and Joal Kjarsgaard have run the Metropolis Avengers together all year. Joal has decided to branch out and take his own team in Brassball. We had 2 available. Abilene and Riverbend have both been unmanaged since early in the year. Joal has decided to take over the Riverbend Blackhawks team. I'm sure in the next few weeks he will be choosing a new team name and nickname. He also may reconstruct his ballpark. Good luck to Joal and his new team. Remember we are still looking for 1 more owner and a backup or 2. Let us know if you have someone in mind.

League Dues

Kevin and I are happy to announce that we have a sufficient amount of money in the Brassball bank account that we do not need any dues from any existing members for next year. Due to the successful and inexpensive transition to the web site for information, no dues are needed. **WOW a free year of play.** When a new member

comes along, we will only charge them \$10.00 for dues. We will reevaluate after the 2000 season again for any dues needed.

On Time Mailings Awards

Several teams this year have completed all of their mailings and deadlines on time for the entire year. In our busy lives this is really a credit to achieve such an accomplishment. To reward these teams, they are given an extra sandwich pick between the 3rd and 4th rounds of the draft. Here are the teams and congratulations on this feat. Bloomington, Gem City, Glen Allen, Long Island, Ocala and Stanley.

Newsletter Article Count

Here are teams that contributed articles during the year to the newsletter. Thanks to everyone who contributed this year. It makes the web site more interesting to be able to read news about other teams and how their manager sizes up his team or sees things down the road. Below will be listed the newsletter article count since January. Let me know if any of this is incorrect.

Bloomington	6
Columbus	1
Gem City	6
Glen Allen	4
Metropolis	6
North Georgia	1
Ocala	1
Stanley	3
Wauwatosa	2

Trade Wires

The Ocelots have some extra pitching. If you think you are going to need innings for next season, they have Jim Abbott on the block. Granted, he is horrible, but he did pitch 82 innings. It will probably be cheapest 80+ you ever purchased.

Player Awards

Kevin and I will be sending out a players awards ballot in the next week or so. We will also send out final stats for all teams. On the ballot, you will be choosing the MVP, Cy Young and the Rookie of the year. I will have you fill out the ballot and e-mail it back to me much like we did the All-Star ballot. This ballot will be due back by the 25th of October. Results will be in the next newsletter.

Fines

Wauwatosa is fined 3,125,000.00 for overusing JT Snow by 25 plate appearances over the buffer. Wauwatosa is also fined 1,000,000.00 for overusing Doug Jones by 4 innings pitched over the buffer.

Upcoming Deadlines

October 20th...If you make a trade during the month of October, you must report the trade in writing to your LD, Lenny Luchtefeld, for it to take effect.

October 20th...If you wish to submit a trade wire listing, you must submit the listing to your LD, Lenny Luchtefeld, by the 20th of the month for it to be included in the following newsletter.

October 20th...If you wish to submit an article for the newsletter, you must submit the article to your LD, Lenny Luchtefeld, by the 20th of the month for it to be included in the following newsletter.

October 25th...Player awards ballot due back to your LD. This is a required mailing.

October 25th...Any new rule proposals due to LD's.