

The Press Box

July 1999

By Lenny Luchtefeld

Long Island maintains 7 game lead in the East.

Bloomington goes undefeated on the road.

Ocala takes back the lead in the West.

Stanley has a 3 game lead for the Wildcard spot.

NL East

Long Island (12-16) continues to lead the pack but a sub .500 month didn't hurt them. The Tigers drop back to the .500 mark. No other team, including 2nd place Wauwatosa, seems to be able to make a run at the Tigers. The bright spot seems to be the pitching staff as they are ranked 5th in the league in ERA. Olerud is takes first half MVP honors for the teams as he is hitting .327 and is in the top 10 in 7 of the 11 league leader categories.

Wauwatosa (12-16) stayed in 2nd place in the division this month. They remained on 7 games back of Long Island despite only winning 12 games this month. Do the Wizards have the resources to make a charge? Another offensive player with power may be the key. Burnitz could use some protection behind him.

Glen Allen (11-17) maintained their progress from last month, winning 11 games again. The Mets leapfrogged over Racine to get into 3rd in June. Vizquel continues to head up the offense with a .313 batting average and 18 steals. Roberto Hernandez leads the pitching with 19 saves and a 3.45 ERA.

Racine (10-18) fell back into 4th place this month. The pitching staff is carrying the team this year as they are ranked in the league in ERA. The pitching can't overcome the lack of offense though. Segui came over in a trade with Box City to help the offense but he wasn't much of a factor this month.

NL Central

Bloomington (24-3) did something only most of wish we could do and that is to go undefeated on the road. A prefect 14-0 as they mowed there way through the NL East this month. An undefeated record at home or on the road is very impressive. The Bees are 1st in hitting and 2nd pitching in the league. With 61 wins, at a little over the halfway point, it looks like a 115-120 win season for Bloomington.

Stanley (17-11) had an another impressive month. With 17 wins they have gained a 3 game lead in the wildcard race over North Georgia but another 8 games back from the front running Bees. The Sioux are tops in Era in the league. Moyer leads the pitching charge with a 3.63 ERA and Spradlin leads in saves with 13.

Columbus (12-16) remained in 3rd place in the division. The Buckeyes are under performing the market these days. 2nd in the league and hitting and a respectable team

ERA, they should be playing better. Higginson leads the league in hitting with a .374 mark and providing some power. Columbus seems to need help in the power department, as only 2 players have more than 10 homers. They could also use someone to come in and close the door on a close game. Despite all of this they are only 3 games out of the final Wildcard spot. Maybe a trade is in the near future.

River Bend (unknown) The Blackhawks have lost their Manager due to time restraints. The team is for now being played by their opponents each month.

NL West

Ocala (18-10) The Ocelots have been up and down this year so far. They got off to a good start the first month but hit a bump in the road in the second. In June they bounced back with a 18-win month in June. The Ocelots are solid all the way around, as they are 3rd in hitting and 4th in pitching in the league. They are not blessed with the great power but make up for it with all the speed merchants that they have. The team is 98 steals ahead of their next best competitor in steals for the year.

North Georgia (14-14) Played .500 ball in June. They started the month a game ahead of Ocala and ended up trading places with the Ocelots. They now see themselves in 2nd place in the division and in 2nd place in the Wildcard race. They trail in both races by 3 games. Jeter continues to be the teams MVP boasting a .329 average.

Gem City (12-16) featuring 3 of the leagues top10 hitters. Bagwell, Grissom and Rodriquez all are hitting .313 or better. Bagwell is also 3rd in RBI's and homers. But with all that offense, the pitching is just the opposite. They are last in the league in pitching with a 6.26 ERA. They keep falling short on those 10-9 games. Even with all of this, they managed to move into 3rd place in the division.

Metropolis (10-18) The Avengers seem to have given up on this season. They have dealt away good cards for this year for future prospects. This month they dropped into last in the division and seem doomed to stay there. Bronswell Patrick, just brought up this month, has been a shinning star. Patrick has gone 4-0 with a 3.18 ERA for the month.

National League All-Star Ballots

It is time once again to start thinking about the All-Star game. This years game will be played at the Hall of Justice Stadium by the Metropolis Avengers. Kevin and I would like to thank Andy and Joal for accepting the honor of playing the game. The game will be played in early to middle August.

I will ask that each one of you e-mail me a copy of your primary stats in .PRT form (using the game) or Excel form, whichever way you track your team's stats, after July's games. This way I can take all of the statistical files and put them in one zip file, e-mail it out to all of you so that you can have every players stats to make an informed decision.

Unfortunately, (though most people did report) we did not get 100% cooperation this past month, preventing the All-Star ballots from going out at their "regularly" scheduled time. Please help to ensure this does not happen this month. We want all teams to be represented in the voting process. If you have any doubt as to what is needed from you, simply contact your LD. Thanks in advance.

Here is how to create a .PRT file using the Strat game: after you have imported results from all of July's games and the Strat-O-Matic program is active, choose BRASSBALL, click on your team, choose statistics, choose primary stats for your team, select File at the top, then choose print to file. It will prompt you to choose a file name. Pick something that is appropriate to your team. I use the name of my team and then the number of the month that I just played. An example of this for my team would be boxcity7. This would be for games just played in July.

I will be sending out an All-star ballot in Excel form by e-mail at the end of this month's play. I will ask that each of you vote for the 3 top in all categories except outfielders and pitchers. In those categories we will need you to vote for the top 5. One, being the best and so on all the way to 5 or 10. **It is mandatory that you vote.** You can return the e-mail file answered or print it out and answer it and send it by mail. After I have all the stats files, I will zip them up and e-mail them out.

Trades

- 1) Stanley sends \$50,000 to the **Plaza Lions** for Luis Sojo and his contract prepaid.
- 2) Stanley sends **Glen Allen** its 4th round draft pick in return for Chad Fox (MO) contract prepaid.

Trading Deadline Approaching

The in-season trade deadline, for trading between the two Leagues is 10:00 p.m. Central time, July 20. Trades between the American League and the National League can only take place up to July 20th. After that deadline, trades between the 2 league teams will take effect after the season.

The in-season trade deadline for trading within each League is 10:00 p.m. Central time, August 20. After that deadline, trades between teams will take effect after the season.

Contract Signings

Stanley signs **Chad Fox** to a 1 year contract.

Columbus signs **Brad Fullmer** to a 1 year contract.

Newsletter Article Count

This is the newsletter article count I have as of the end of June.

Bloomington 4, Gem City 4, Stanley 2, Columbus 1, Glen Allen 1, North Georgia 1, Ocala 1 and Wauwatosa 1.

Fines

Gem City is fined 1 million dollars for not sending a Series Report form to the NL Reporter. This is their 1st late mailing.

Bits and Pieces

- Σ Please take the time to read about the deadlines at the end of the newsletter each month. Owners seem to be confused on what form to send to whom and when. All of the dates, names and the form needed are listed below. The most unpleasant part of my job is to fine owners for tardiness. If you have any questions on any of this please contact Kevin or myself before the deadline occurs.
- Σ Just a friendly reminder, please send the team leaders form and a copy of your primary stats to Tom Taormina each month. I would also like to continue getting the team leaders form and a copy of the primary stats for your team from only the NL guys. This helps me write the newsletter by giving me more information about your team each month.

Wish List for CD-ROM Version 5.0

I found this on the Strat Fan web site and thought you guys might like to read about some possible future changes to the game and how they come about.

Over the years, many of the ideas touted in this poll have made their way into the game features. Strat-O-Matic founder Hal Richman takes pride in his ability to meet the desires of his customers. The most recent example involved the Super Hal improvements to in the computer's bullpen. The idea began as a broad request for artificial intelligence by Dick Hunt. Game designer Bob Winberry took a look at the idea and concluded it would be difficult, if not impossible to program. But Richman was impressed by the general consensus for an improvement to the computer manager and he asked Winberry to determine which feature was most desired by gamers and try to accommodate them. The result was a vast improvement in the computer manager's ability to control the bullpen. It's not artificial intelligence, but given the limitations of computers dealing with such a complicated issue as bullpen management, it's the most practical solution. Missing from this poll is the plea for modem or Internet play. SOM knows that has ranked high in previous polls and is working to provide that feature soon, perhaps before Version 5.0 comes out. So it's time for gamers to choose. This year we will allow more room for you to write in your own ideas. When we ask that you rank the ideas from 1 to 10, that means there is only one #1 and one #2 etc. Some gamers have sent use as many as five #1s, making them impossible to tally. We will collect the results and present them online in a fashion like the college football polls with a top pick being worth 10 points and a 10th pick worth only one.

SOUND

Add short descriptions of play results like "Out," "Two-Base Hit," "Runner on First Goes to Third," and so forth. A lot of verbiage could become annoying, but just a few audible words would be a big plus.

GRAPHICS

Allow for a customized toolbar to help deal with clutter. For example, if you only use the Pie Chart once in a while, put it on the tool bar so it is out of the way until you need it. Winberry, aware of the screen clutter, has been reluctant to make the toolbar larger, but if it helps control items on the screen it might be worthwhile. Scroll the play-by-play along the bottom of the screen one line deep but all the way across. Allow for a simplified, optional game screen, even one as simple as we had in the text game, so it can be used very small. Show all dice rolls.

GAME PLAY

Make injuries reflect reality in the same way the game handles home runs and base hits. Actually, it would be good to change the terms from "injury" to "games missed." If a player were in 130 games, he would come close to that mark in a replay, just as a 70-homer guy will come close to that mark. If the injuries are significantly high or low, allowances can be made just as they are for triples or pitchers' walks.

COMPUTER

A league report that can be easily exported by the commissioner and imported by league members. This could ease a commissioner's burden for newsletters by sending all of the data he has to league members. This is possible now through the Duplicate League function, but handling the files can be a little dicey because it is not easy to determine which file goes with which league. If it were possible to save a duplicate league to the A drive right way, gamers would avoid some having to sort through the computer folders. Allow limits on the Computer Manager for better use of certain players. For example, a player who just played an inning at shortstop should never start at that position. If a pitcher had no saves, don't use them in save situations

Upcoming Deadlines

July 15th...League report form due to your leagues reporter. Jeff Beresford-Howe for the AL and Tony Galietta for the NL. The report form is available on the web site.

July 15th...Series results are due out to your July opponents. You must send box scores, play by play and subset stats.

July 20th... You must submit your starting pitcher rotation to your LD, Lenny Luchtefeld, for August games.

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

July 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.

July 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.

July 20th... The in-season trade deadline, for trading between the two Leagues is 10:00 p.m. Central time.

July 25th...Send a completed team leaders form and a hard copy printout of your teams primary stats for July to the leagues statistician, Tom Taormina and League Director, Lenny Luchtefeld. The Team Leaders Form is available on the web site.