

Vagrant League

Fantasy Baseball

Volume 1, Issue 5

June 2002

May Analysis

Two Months In The Books

Ed Feldman

Futurian

Two months have been logged in the 2002 campaign so far the waters are as muddied as ever. When last we met at the close of April, the Master Blasters were firmly in first with 96.0 points and a lead of 14 points. Oh what a difference a month makes. The devastating week for the Master Blasters was the second week in May that saw him fall 12 points to 79.0 and temporarily out of first place. Although they were back on top by the end of the month it was only by a 3 point lead. Welcome to the pack Master Blasters.

Another rare thing happened in May, also to the Master Blasters. That is that they had to actually pick up a player from the free agent pool. When calling the move Ira was quoted as saying "...there is nothing in the pool worth picking up it is so thin...". Now you know what the rest of us has had to go through the last season+.

As for the tight race going on this year, things have just bunched up even more during the month of May. In the lower half of the standing, at the end of April 20 points

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Seeing Green

A Monster Day

Barry Greenberg

BarBarryan

I assume that most Roto owners share my distaste for the owner who constantly talks about how great their players are and do not miss an opportunity to gloat when one of their guys has a good performance. Few things are as annoying as the owner who just can't let the chance go by to remind everyone else how great their team or any of their players are. Really, who wants to hear it?

So please forgive me for this article, but I just can not help but share my joy at the experience that my guy Shawn provided to me and all those around the country who were lucky enough to have him on their roto teams the week of May 14th through May 20. The pleasure was increased by the fact that up to this week, he was in a massive slump. Up to this point, he had 3 dingers, about 17 RBIs, and was batting below .250. This from my stud, my \$17 centerpiece from who

I needed performance if I would have any chance at contending this year. Granted, Shawn Green is not Bonds, Helton, Sosa, or Vlad Guerrero, but he may be the next best thing and is pretty damn close, so one could appreciate my dismay at his performance to this point.

An inkling of what was to come occurred when on May 21, he smacked 2 dingers and then hit a game winning triple the next evening. Nothing really special, but a great sign that he was breaking out of his funk, particularly as he went about 0 for 18 and was even benched the week before.

Nothing, however, prepared anyone for the Green

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separated 11th from 6th whereas the spread from 11th to 6th at the end of May was only 15.5 points showing that while the clock may be ticking it is still not late to make a run for respectability and possibly money.

In the upper half of the standings the gap has narrowed even more where the difference between 7th and 2nd went from 25.5 points at the end of April to just 15.0 points at the end of May. Number don't lie (although they can be manipulated) and what they show is parity in the league and essentially 11 out of 12 teams in the thick of it.

Analysis of the average position finish during May show the biggest decline from April belonging to the Mutts where his avg. rank went from 4.3 to 8.8. The biggest gainer for May was Shu's Crew where his rank rose to 4.0 from his April tally of 7.5. The most consistent from April to May (besides Red Storm who has been in last the whole time) has been the BarBarryans who posted a 7.3 in April and a 7.5 in May. Maybe it's time to try a trade BarBarryans.

Team	Avg. Rank	Team	Avg. Rank
Master Blasters	1.5	Monarchs	7.5
Futurians	2.0	Double D	8.1
Arms & Hammers	3.5	KrackerJacks	8.5
Eight Men Out	4.0	Mutts	8.8
Shu's Crew	4.0	Marauders	10.6
BarBarryans	7.5	Red Storm	12.0

Average Rank During May

As for the emerging upper echelon this season, with two months in the books it seems to be the Master Blasters, Futurians, Eight Men Out and Shu's Crew. Knocking at the back door is Arms & Hammers and a late entry into the mix, Double D. Double D finished May with a 10.5 surge the last week jumping four places in the standings. Nice job.

What will the standings look like at the end of June, the half way point of the season? Can Double D maintain his strong finish in May, will Master Blasters pull ahead with a large lead again? Will someone else come from the pack to get into serious money contention. Who know, but next months newsletter will analyze it for you.



Random Thoughts

Musings, Rumblings & Grumblings

John Ortiz

Arms & Hammer

Since the May issue of the VLFB newsletter was dappled with toilet bowl humor, I decided it was my turn to jump into the cesspool. However, the following article will be first class material and there will be absolutely no mention of a certain ballplayer (no pun intended) in New York who prefers to sodomize members of the male persuasion. OK, Sam Champion breath? So here are my totally random thoughts about baseball, rotisserie and life in general.

- It would have been fun to see what the Rockies hitters values would have been at the auction if the humidor stories had leaked earlier. I certainly wouldn't have traded for Todd Zeile at \$7. Nonetheless, the offensive numbers are still offensive in the thin Colorado air and Zeile is on pace for 30+ dingers.
- Memo to Rich Aurillia: Your career year is over.
- The Mets should send Grant Roberts to the pitching poor Reds for Juan Encarnacion and then send Jay Payton to the Royals for a bag of used BP baseballs.
- So CNN/SI is off the air. What a surprise! It was always one step behind ESPN and with The Best Damn Sports Show and Mohr Sports available there was just no room for that lame product.
- There is continued talk to eliminate the penny from US currency. I think they should purge the nickel as well. Too damn heavy for five cents.
- I like Randy Johnson's mullet. Speaking of the Big Unit, where do you think he got that nickname from?
- If anyone can invent paper plates that don't stick together, they'd be a millionaire.
- Tim Raines & Andres Galarraga. Who's next, Warren Cromartie?
- And by the way, I don't think he's gay. Not that here's anything wrong with that.



WEBSITE LINKS

[Vagrant League Fantasy Baseball](#) (Our home page)

[USAStats](#) (Our stat service. League code and password are both vagrant).

[Major League Baseball](#)

[ESPN MLB](#)

[Rotoworld](#)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEEKLY ROSTER MOVES

PLACE: CALL IN OR BY EMAIL

Time: Every Tuesday By Noon

Roster moves for the week must be received by noon. "Dibs" is based on who is lower in the standings the week before.

TRADING DEADLINE

TIME: AUGUST 13TH, NOON

There is no trading after this deadline until the season is over

SEPTEMBER EXPANSION

TIME: SEPTEMBER 3RD

Beginning with the September 3rd moves you can expand your roster from 23 players to 24. The extra player can be either a hitter or pitcher.



Records were meant to be broken

Part II

Ed Feldman

Futurian

Lets take an updated look at records that are in jeopardy of being broken this year, and remember not all of the records are good. The stats have been prorated out for the entire season based on the final May stats.

Hitting

Last we looked, Arms & Hammers was on pace for 312 homers but that pace has cooled to 'only' 294 homers which is 6 behind 2nd place of 300. You better have a talk with your team John if they want to

Monster Day

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explosion that occurred in Milwaukee on the afternoon of May 23. To briefly summarize: Shawn Green hit 4 homers in one game, went 6 for 6, scored 6 runs, and had 19 total bases, most of which statistics tied or broke major league records. Many commentators described this as the greatest one day offensive performance ever.

One of the joys of Roto is in watching your guys perform, or even in seeing a great performance in the box scores, so this was a doozie. This was a day game, and I tuned in to the on line live box score on mlb.com when he had already smacked 3 dingers, so I was immediately rewarded. Two at bats later, as I watched the at bat unfold, the screen announced, 'Green homers' and I was literally just cackling in my office, not caring about what my co-workers thought. I had to tell someone, so I called our commissioner Ed, who could appreciate the joy of a fellow owner witnessing one of his guys having a historical outing. The hot streak did not end there. Over the next three games, Green homered 4 more times, and in the course of the week completely obliterated all signs of his

horrific slump, several more records, and vaulted himself back into the league leaders in several 5 x 5 categories.

Over the course of the season, this really won't mean a thing Roto standings-wise, but the sheer joy of knowing one of my guys put on such a display out weighs all the eight-earned-run-2-inning-stints-that-Ryan-Jensen-or-whatever-stiff-happens-to-turn-one-in-for-my-team performances that suck the joy out of Roto. And knowing he could have another fantastic run gives hope that my team does have a chance, at least offensively.

So I didn't mean to gloat, but just to share my Roto joy with my fellow owners. Even though we are all in competition, I hope each owner gets the satisfaction of having one of their players turn in such a performance (just in a different league). And even if my team goes into the toilet now, at least I got one gallant rush.

Now Shawn, how about stealing some bases?



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A Cup of Coffee & A Can of Corn

The Story of a Rookie

Chris Oliva

Marauder

Greetings fellow owners from one-half of the newest addition to the VFLB, the Marauders. As a rookie Rotisserie owner I have found, two months through the season, that there is a lot more than meets the eye when it comes to being a successful owner.

Tom Jordan and I went into our first auction with absolutely no experience in 5x5 Rotisserie-style fantasy baseball leagues. We both had a fair amount of success in internet-based non-Rotisserie mixed-league fantasy baseball. I am sure everyone in this league has played their fair share of internet-based fantasy baseball. There have been a number of difficult issues to deal with in the transition from total point based mixed-league fantasy baseball to National League only 5x5 Rotisserie-style baseball. The fact that you have to field a team made up strictly of National League players and competing against 12 teams as opposed to 10 puts a heavy premium on evaluation of players way down on the depth chart of every National League team. This was a lot more difficult than first imagined. Adding to the difficulties is the fact that this was not a draft, but an auction. As everyone in this league knows from the first time they sat at the auction table, auctions are far more difficult than drafts. A fact that was not truly appreciated by this team owner until the auction was over. No matter how many magazines, websites and newspapers I read, nothing was able to completely prepare me for the big day.

All in all I thought Tom and I did what most rookie owners would do, overpaid for a few players (Alou/Looper), made a few good selections (Counsell/Morris), picked up a few players we wish we wouldn't have (Blum/Stairs/Looper/Castro) and got out of the auction with a serviceable team. The trade we made with Eight Men Out, at the protected list deadline, let everyone know, including ourselves, that the Marauders were NOT going to be a force to be reckoned with in the Saves category (Maddux for Graves).

Two months into the season injuries have played a big role in our team's activity, Grace getting hurt has opened the door for the Krackerjack's Durazo to play everyday and

Grace to ride the pine. Benny Agbayani, Steve Kline, Ramon Castro, Matt Stairs and Greg Maddux have all seen time on the DL. These DL visits have allowed us to pick up the Rockies pitcher John "Love that humidior" Thomson, Cub's infielder Mark Bellhorn, Brewers' Paul Bako, and SF's Tom Goodwin. We are pleasantly surprised with the start Benito Santiago (\$3) is having in San Francisco as well as the MVP stats Jim Edmonds (\$9) is putting up in St. Louis. I personally have enjoyed the office discussions with Ed and Frank. I have always been a National League fan (hate the DH and love the Braves) and because of the league I have been watching a lot more baseball and paying much closer attention to the entire league.

My thoughts on the first 2 months of the season:

The way the Master Blasters started the season made me think we were all playing for 2nd place (and Lance Berkman was going to hit 75 home runs). He's cooled down (if 17 HR's through May 27th is cool) and it is an incredibly tight race.

Eight Men Out is getting more out of \$41 worth of pitching than humanly possible. Great starts out of Glavine, Graves, Padilla and D'Amico has helped a lot.

Best all around Pitching Staff (Eight Men Out)-
Wins, HWR and ERA all of this for \$41!!

Best all around Hitting Club (Arms & Hammers)-
What a start for Encarnacion (\$4), Sosa, Floyd, Bell (\$4), and Vidro. Needs stolen bases to be complete offense.

Team in the bottom half of the standings with the best chance to make a run at the money (KrackerJacks) – Durazo, Biggio, Drew, Jones, Patterson, Leiter, Vazquez and Woody Williams could help him move up over the summer. Has to hope for the best with Jack Wilson, Marcus Giles, Jason Bere, and Wade Miller.

Predicted order of finish – 1) Master Blasters; 2) Futurians; 3) Arms & Hammers (even with that pitching); 4) Bar Barryans; 5) Shu's Crew (even with that offense)

I am really looking forward to the rest of the year and I am sure there will be a lot to talk about in the next couple of months. Good Luck.



RULES REFRESHER

TRADING

- Unrestricted trading with other teams until noon on the second Tuesday in August. No trading after this date.
- After the start of the auction until the trading deadline, any players traded with a salary of \$6 or less will have \$2 added to his contract each time he is traded.
- After every trade, both teams must have eligible players at all 23 positions. You cannot leave a position “empty”.

FARM SYSTEM CONTRACTS

- Farm system players called up will have a contract of \$1 his call up year, \$3 his second year and \$5 his third year.

WAIVER RULE

- Any player on your bench or DL that is released back into the free agent pool will be a waiver.
- A waived player can be claimed the following week and placed anywhere in your lineup as long as you maintain position eligibility.
- You do not need to have an open roster spot. You can make room for him by in turn waiving *any* player on your roster (as long as eligibility is maintained).

PLAYERS TRADED TO THE AL

If your player is traded to the AL you have two options:

1. Release him from your team within 1 week of his trade. This will place him permanently out of our league as he will be an AL free agent. You then pick up a player from the free agent pool or activate a player from your bench.
2. Keep him in your lineup. If you do, you can DL or bench him and then place him back in your lineup via a roster move. You are also free to trade him within our league.



Part II

reach the record books. Tell them no one ever remembers third place.

On the down side we still have a serious contender for the worst batting average all time of .2051 with the Monarchs at .2304. Ok, so they are still a long way from .2051 but they are also a long way from 2nd worst all-time of .2543. Seems like a record will fall here. Also still in serious consideration for 2nd worst BA of all time is the Mutts with .252 and the BarBarryans and KrackerJacks, both with a .258 BA. Better start hitting guys unless you are counting on the Monarchs to take it for you.

Pitching

Last month we thought Eight Men Out could challenge for most wins of all time but his production has dropped off late and is now only on a pace for 94. That would place him 6 behind 2nd place. The category that still looks like it may be broken this year is saves. The BarBarryans are still on pace for 99 saves which would eclipse the all-time total of 95 by 4. Even 2nd all-time of 92 is in reach by Shu's Crew where his current projection is 87. Come on, Shu, pump out a few extra saves and you get in the record books. Honorable mention has to go to the Monarchs with a 3.396 staff ERA that is in range of the 2nd best all-time mark of 3.193. Seems like we can have two records broken in the WHIP category with Shu's Crew at 1.1897 and Eight Men Out at 1.1959. 1st all-time is 1.180 and 2nd is 1.207. Keep it up four more months and two GOOD pitching records will be broken this year.

On down side, the Marauders and KrackerJacks are still threatening the worst saves mark of 1 and 5 with 1 & 2 respectively. Unless there is some luck for both of these teams at least 2nd worst saves may be broken. The only other bad pitching record in jeopardy at this point is worst WHIP of 1.522. At press time, Red Storm had a .15221 WHIP which would just eke him into worst all time. Just in case things should improve for the Storm, 2nd worst of 1.501 is also within reach.

Be sure to check back next month as we look at the halfway point numbers and see if there are any changes to the potential heroes and goats of 2002.

