

Vagrant League

Fantasy Baseball

Volume 1, Issue 4

May 2002

April Analysis

How the First Month Went

Ed Feldman

Futurian

With the first month of the season behind us let's see how things have shaken out so far. To start with, Master Blasters have spent the entire month in first place (I am only looking at the Tuesday stats and not the individual stats in between) which is annoying but not unexpected. At the close of the month, on the 4/29 stats, he already has a whopping 14.0 point lead over second place.

Lets look now where the rest of us merely human Rotisserie players stand. I guess the first place to start is the Anti-Master Blasters, that being Red Storm. Why them you ask? Because they have been in last place every week in the month of April. While they have hovered around 43 points they have not been able to mount a serious challenge to 11th place.

The table below shows the average position for each team during April. Lets take a look at some of the data behind these numbers. The first thing I expected to see when I analyzed each week is that there would be a lot of

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Dumping Season?

Time to Dump vs. Time to Take a Dump

Barry Greenberg

BarBarryan

It is getting near that time of the year where each owner must assess the strengths and weaknesses of their teams and determine whether each has the 'stuff' to be competitive for the remainder of the season. For some, the conclusion is obvious-they have strong teams which will almost assuredly finish in the money. The rest of us are not so lucky, and may soon want to make the decision that we should fight for a money spot or trade high salaried players for cheaper talent, in an effort to improve their squads for next season. This type of transaction is, of course, known as 'dumping'.

It may seem premature to be considering this in mid May. Then again, maybe not. If you are hopelessly out of it this year, an early dump may generate the best trade terms before all the other teams that may want to dump start offering their best talent. The down side of giving up this early is that it tends to take the fun out of

participating in the league, at least for this season, and is no guarantee of a money finish the next year.

Many variables must be considered when making this determination. As of May 6, the teams in places four through tenth were separated by only eleven points, with some categories very close. Furthermore, as the season is still young, wide swings are still possible. As time goes on however, placement tends to become more static, with movement more difficult. Each owner is thus advised to take stock of the direction his team will likely take in the coming months, based on such factors as their

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April

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yo-yo like movement as having a good or bad week in April can cause your team to move a lot in the standings. I was surprised to see that this did not happen that much at all. The two most extreme cases were the Futurians and the Monarchs.

Team	Avg. Rank	Team	Avg. Rank
Master Blasters	1.0	BarBarryans	7.3
Eight Men Out	3.0	Shu's Crew	7.5
Mutts	4.3	Marauders	8.8
Arms & Hammers	4.5	Monarchs	9.0
Futurians	5.0	Double D	10.0
KrackerJacks	5.5	Red Storm	12.0

In looking at the Futurians, their standings during the 4 weeks in April were 3rd, 11th, 3rd & 3rd. Clearly they had a bad week in week 2 but rebounded and were able to maintain the good numbers. Conversely, the Monarchs 4 weeks were 10th, 5th, 10th & 11th. They seemed to have had an uncharacteristically good week during week 2 but could not sustain it and quickly returned to their place in the standings. The only other real swing, although not so nearly pronounced, was the Arms & Hammers. They started out in 7th then moved to 4th & 5th only to jump up to 2nd closing out the month strong. Next months newsletter will tell if they were able to sustain it.

There are a few consistency awards for the month of April. The top two are the aforementioned Master Blasters and Red Storm who have been in 1st & 12th respectively for the entire month of April. Next up is Double D who placed 11th, 9th, 11th & 9th the first four weeks followed closely by Shu's Crew at 8th, 8th, 8th & 6th and the Mutts at 5th, 3rd, 4th & 5th.

On the injury front in April, no one was affected than the KrackerJacks that saw 4 pitchers shelved on the disabled list by the end of the month including top pitcher Wade Miller and solid support pitcher Woody Williams. Decimated by these injuries, a strong pitching staff coming out of the auction has been unable to live up to expectations and is just trying to ride out the storm until all the pitchers can return (they hope).

Who will finish May strong and move into the upper echelon of teams? Who knows, but next months newsletter will analyze it for you.



To Sleaze Or Not To Sleaze

A Look at How This Years Teams Did

Frank Cottone

KrackerJack

For new GMs, we say, what the hell does that mean? But once you get the explanation you figure that the saying fits the action. It's a Sleazy Move. It's corrupt, cheesy, and just plain unethical. Having the choice of 2 different players after the draft is over just because you got lucky and the rookie in your farm didn't get called up during the previous season. The debate will rage on in VLFB for a more sensible transaction to insert your rookie of the year candidate in your active roster on Opening Day. But enough of my venting, how did the 'Sleazy' GMs do with their VLFB privilege?

Lets start with the Futurians. League Commissioner, and the one responsible for allowing this rule to continue to exist. The Futurians exercised their right to sleaze and inserted Morgan Ensberg into his active roster for Opening Day. From that point until the first day of actual transactions Ensberg had 0 HRs, 0 RBIs, batted .214, with 3 Rs, and 1 SB in 28 ABs. The player he switched Ensberg for was Mark Loretta. Loretta had 0 HRs, 1 RBI, batted .273, with 1 R, and 0 SBs, in 11 ABs. Close but, Advantage Not to Sleaze!

Another GM who elected to become a Sleaze victim was last years champion the Master Blasters. He chose to put rookie phenom Sean Burroughs in his starting lineup and bench veteran Andres Galarraga. Sean Burroughs had 0 HRs, 1 RBI, batted .267, with 1 R, and 0 SBs in 30 ABs. What has Galarraga done you ask? Well how about 0 HRs, 4 RBIs, batted .333, 4 Rs, and 1 SB to boot in 18 ABs. Clearly the Master Blaster should have chosen Not to Sleaze!

Then there is Double D with the front-runner rookie of the year candidate Josh Beckett. Double D passed on labeling himself a 'Sleazer' by not inserting Josh Beckett at the end of the draft. A pitcher he could have sidelined was Brian Anderson. How did Anderson do in his first 3 starts? 0 Ws, 9 Ks, a 1.79 WHIP, and a 8.36 ERA in 14 IPs. Ouch! Beckett on the other hand had 0 Ws, 11 Ks, a 1.34 WHIP, and a 2.84 ERA in 12.2 IPs. Sleaze Double D, it's your right!

And then there was the BarBarryans. The BarBarryans

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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.



Dumping

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players' current versus expected performance and injuries which may be expected to resolve.

Further complicating the calculus is the effect that the \$2 tax enacted last season on salaries of traded players with contracts of less than \$7. Last year's trading activity may have been stunted as their was no serious competition for first place, so we really do not know how the market was affected by this tax.

Additionally, the draft was unusual this year given the large number of seeming values of \$3 or less, as noted in an article in a previous edition of this publication. Thus, the 'going rate' of a 'dump' trade has not yet been set, complicating the decision in this respect.

Let me now compare and contrast the difficult decision inherent in 'dumping' to that made when one 'takes a dump'. Fortunately, the latter decision is usually naturally made for you, without much thought. A large meal may do the trick. Perhaps a nice cup of coffee helps you along.

For those of you who are not totally disgusted at this point and have continued reading, the reason I bring this up is not only that the similarity in terminology invites this juvenile wordplay, but that the status of my team in more seasons than not resembles the second form of a dump. To put it another way, no matter which decision I make, I am usually left looking at sh-t. Sometimes I wish rotisserie was as simple as having a big cup of coffee.



Sleaze Moves

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had the choice to roll the dice on Kurt Ainsworth's first couple of starts and put Jason Schmidt on the DL. Obviously Schmidt got no stats and for Ainsworth, well take a look at these numbers: 1 W, 6 Ks, a 1.25 WHIP, and a 0.75 ERA in 12 IPs. Any GM would take those numbers. BarBarryans, you do remember the 'Sleaze Move', don't you?

Red Storm did the right thing though. They elected not to activate Adam Everett. Red Storm is solid at Shortstop and Middle Infield with D'Angelo Jimenez and Tony Womack. Besides Everett isn't exactly a wiz with the stick, as a matter of fact, he got sent down to AAA on April 21st. Red Storm was wise when they exercised their right not to Sleaze.

So the debate will go on. Should I draft this \$1 guy and replace him with my rookie? Should this privilege exist in the first place? The VLFB Exclusive, Sleaze Move.



The Good, the Bad & the Ugly

Players That are Making Their Owner Smile or Frown

Ira Mandelbaum

Master Blaster

I am writing this on May 7 so some of these assessments could be very different by the time this article is published. Be that as it may, the beginning of each season often produces some very good and some very bad statistics. Some players will be on pace to hit .400, save 60+ games, or win 30 games. We all know that the reality of actually achieving any of these goals are slim to none but if those players are the ones on your team.....well one can dream can't they. I have looked at each team and have chosen some of those players that are making their team owner smile or frown with utter disgust and frustration.

BARBARRYANS

THE GOOD:

Kazuhisa Ishii – 6 WINS, 41K's in 36.2 innings, 1.28 RATIO, and 2.95 ERA – who would have thought coming out of spring training, struggling like he was, that he would have put up these kinds of numbers.

Damian Miller – 7 HR, 23 RBI, 14 RUNS, .276 BA – Is this a fluke or has Miller stepped up to become one of baseball's elite catchers?

THE BAD:

Jason Schmidt: 9.1 IP, 2.14 RATIO, 7.71 ERA – yuchh – fortunately these numbers are attributed to an injury. Unfortunately for Barry, Schmidt is injured. Will this be an injury plagued year for Schmidt or can he bounce back from the injury and pitch like he did the end of last year?

ARMS & HAMMERS

THE GOOD:

- As a team, other than speed, the best offense

Todd Zeile – 6 HR, 20 RBI, 12 RUNS, .323 BA – appears to be enjoying the thin air.

THE BAD:

Mo Vaughn – 1 HR, 7 RBI, 7 RUNS, .238 BA – The extra weight looks good on him

DOUBLE D

THE GOOD:

Vladimir Nunez – 5 SAVES, 1.086 RATIO, 1.862 ERA – Seems to be the Marlin closer – Doug rolled the dice and did not crap out.

THE BAD:

Ben Sheets – 2 WINS, 1.607 RATIO, 4.580 ERA – Not horrible numbers but disappointing. If he is going to throw at someone he better learn how to fight.

EIGHT MEN OUT

THE GOOD:

- As a team Lee's pitching staff is statistically one of the best – Lee has perfected the art of investing in penny stocks

Vincent Padilla – 4 WINS, 41K's in 47 innings, 1.021 RATIO, and 2.87 ERA – Flash in the pan or the real deal? Seems to have made the transition from reliever to starter.

Jeff D'Amico – .983 RATIO and a 3.17 ERA – he has proven in the past that when he is healthy he is good – Lee and the Mets hope he stays healthy.

THE BAD:

Alfonzo with 0 HR, Deshields and A. Brown hitting just over .200

Javy Lopez: 1 HR, 5RBI, 2 RUNS, .182 – Right now he is hitting like Albie Lopez...the guy he was confused with at the draft.

KRACKERJACKS

THE GOOD:

Kirk Rueter – 4 WINS, .991 RATIO, 1.74 ERA – beautiful numbers for such an ugly player

Livan Hernandez – 4 WINS, 1.068 RATIO, 2.70 ERA – he can hit too.

THE BAD:

-Injuries to Wade Miller & Woody Williams – how good would this staff be if Miller & Williams were healthy?

FUTURIANS

THE GOOD:

Randy Johnson – Worth every penny – The surprise is not that he has performed well, it is just that these numbers are outrageous. 6 WINS 69 K's in 53 innings .868 RATIO 1.528 ERA – he alone has almost as many K's as my whole team and his ERA is lower than my teams WHIP....just awesome

Brett Tomko – 1.084 RATIO 2.49 ERA and 31 K's in 40 innings – translating talent into stats – can he keep it up?

THE BAD:

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Smile or Frown

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Todd Hollandsworth – 2 HR 11 RBI 7 RUNS 1 SB .236 BA – not exactly feeling the Coors effect...or perhaps he is.

MARAUDERS

THE GOOD:

Danny Bautista – 6 HR 23 RBI 19 RUNS 4 SB .367 BA – producing 5 tool numbers. Is this the case of a good player finally getting the opportunity to play fulltime or is this just a fluke? Who cares, you have already gotten \$2 worth of numbers. These are the players that make the difference of coming in money or not.

Elmer Dessens – Is the Red's pitching staff rubbing off on him or is he rubbing off on them.

THE BAD:

Moises Alou: 2 HR 8 RBI 6 RUNS 1 SB .163 BA – I think he misses Enron.

Tino Martinez – 2 HR 14 RBI 5 RUNS .192 BA – feeling the pressure of replacing yet another great fan favorite player.

MASTER BLASTERS

THE GOOD:

Mike Lowell – 6 HR 26 RBI 20 RUNS .376 BA – Finally putting to use the training he received in the Yankee farm system.

Junior Spivey – 2 HR 21 RBI 24 RUNS 5 SB .336 BA- Putting up numbers like another Junior I know.

THE BAD:

-Being at the bottom in strike outs.

MONARCHS

THE GOOD:

Roy Oswalt – 4 WINS 1.212 RATIO 44 K's in 47 innings 2.29 ERA – No sophomore jinx here.

THE BAD:

Roberto Alomar – 3 HR 13 RBI 17 RUNS 2 SB .248 BA – Feeling the Mets jinx – Shea seems to drain all offensive capabilities...see Mo Vaughn.

MUTTS

THE GOOD:

Michael Barrett – 6 HR 21 RBI 13 RUNS .379 BA – Seems as if he is really enjoying playing in front of packed houses.

Pedro Astacio – 5 WINS 1.119 RATIO 2.571 ERA –

Every pitcher should pitch with a tear in his arm.

Odalis Perez – 4 WINS .662 RATIO 1.656 ERA – Don't hear much of the trade rumors anymore.

THE BAD:

Henry Rodriguez – 0 HR 3 RBI .0500 BA - I know you couldn't have expected much but O Henry yuchhh

Randy Wolf – 1 WIN 1.612 RATIO 7.08 ERA – Thought he was going to turn the corner and be one of the better roto pitchers.

- 1 HR between Casey and Ramirez.

RED STORM

THE GOOD:

Josh Fogg – 2 WINS 1.411 RATIO 3.574 ERA – So far Fogg is the man.

THE BAD:

Mike Hampton – 1 WIN 2.06 RATIO 7.04 ERA – At least Colorado has good school systems.

Roger Cedeno – See Roberto Alomar & Mo Vaughn.

SHU'S CREW

THE GOOD:

Brian Lawrence – 4 WINS 1.04 RATIO 2.52 ERA – When you roll the dice on young pitchers some times it pays off.

Mike Williams – 12 Saves 1.00 RATIO 0.692 ERA – Rolaid's man of the month – He has more saves now than I thought the Pirates would have wins for the year.

THE BAD:

Ray Lankford – 0 HR 2 RBI 4 RUNS 0 SB .206 BA – Once considered a top roto player – how the mighty have fallen.

- Griffey being injured. Think he wishes he were still in Seattle?

As always, this article is not meant to offend it is just nice to have something to read while one is on his throne.



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.



Records Were Meant to be Broken

Heroes & Goats

Ed Feldman

Futurian

Here is a look at records that are in jeopardy of being broken this year, and not all of the records are good. The stats have been prorated out for the entire year based on the May 14th stats.

Hitting

Let's start with Arms & Hammers who is on pace for 312 home runs this season which would shatter the record of 303 homers set in 1999 by Eight Men Out. Even if A&H does tail off a bit, he might still surpass the Mudhens, who are second with 300 dingers back in 1996. Seems like the 'Hammers' part of the team name is very apt this year.

This years potential goats have two teams challenging for 2nd worst all-time batting average where the current mark is a dismal .2543 set in 1993 by the Flatulators (currently the Master Blasters). The teams with the best chance of breaking this horrible record are the Monarchs with a current batting average of a paltry .2373 and Red Storm with an anemic .2488 batting average. Dishonorable mention here should also go to the Mutts with a .2517 current average, Shu's Crew with a .2527 average and the BarBarryans with a .2553 average. Seems like this record will surely be broken this year. You guys better start taking some extra BP or you may be saying baaahhhh come the end of the season.

Pitching

On the good side of the records there seems to be a few that will be challenged this year. First up is wins where Eight Men Out is on pace for 99. The all-time best is 103 set by Master Blasters just last season with 2nd being 100 set by Show Me The Money (currently the Mutts) back in 1997. It just goes to show you do not have to spend a lot of money on pitching to have a good staff (but it does help). Nice job Eight Men Out.

The next category in jeopardy is saves, and that record may be shattered. Shus' Crew is on pace to have 108 saves, shattering the current record of 95

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Heroes & Goats

set by the Monarchs in 1997. Shu is not the only challenger to the record as the BarBarryans are on pace for 97 and Arms & Hammers is on pace for 95. 2nd place all-time is 92, set by Purgatory (currently the Mutts) way back in the pre-internet and MLB expansion days of 1992. Seems like 2nd place will fall with serious threats to first as well. Wow! Seems like some people ought to be trading saves to improve their overall position this season. Owing records does look nice though.

Next up is ratio (WHIP). As hard as it is to believe in this era of baseball, the (good) ratio record may be challenged although we all know ratio can go in the toilet faster than my third bean burrito from Taco Bell. The unlikely team to threaten this record is none other than Shu's Crew. His current Ratio of 1.1481 would *shatter* the current record of 1.180 set in 1992 by the Mudhens. Even should his ratio fall off a bit 2nd is clearly within reach where the current mark is 1.207 also set by the Mudhens back in 1991, our inaugural season. Good job so far Shu.

Last up on the good side is strikeouts where the Futurians are on pace for 1235. The 2nd best mark is 1243 set by Arms & Hammers in 1999. Although the Futurians are on pace to fall short by 8 K's, a team with Randy Johnson should never be counted completely out of the running. Good luck here but don't count on it.

OK, lets look at this years potentials goats on the pitching side. First up is saves. As *impossible* as it is to believe, the worst mark in saves, probably in any league since the founding of Rotisserie, may be broken where the current mark is 1. That is not a typo, back in 1993 the Porn Flakes amassed a grand total of 1 lousy, stinking save. Nine years later, the record they said could never be broken is being threatened by the KrackerJacks where he currently has a save total of zero, zip, zilch, nada. They are pinning his hopes to avoid this ignominious record on the dead, broken arm of one Cutis Leskanic. Uh oh. Even should the get a couple of saves, 2nd worst is still firmly within his reach where the current mark is 5 set by Eight Men Out in 1997. Since misery loves company both 1st & 2nd is in jeopardy this year as the Marauders currently have only one miserable save with not much hope of getting another despite paying \$12 for two "closers" at the auction. They have a good excuse though, they are rookies, but I hope they learn from their mistakes. In unison, on the count of three, let me hear the KrackerJacks & Marauders say baaahhhh...

Last up on the bad side is ratio where Red Storm seems intent on shattering the worst mark in history of 1.522 set by the Futurians back in 2000 with a current ratio of 1.5656. Just in case his pitching staff should accidentally have a good week 2nd worst all-time is still easily within his grasp where that dubious record of 1.501, was also set during the 2000 campaign by Ryan Express. Better start practicing your baaahhhh-ing now guys.



My Thanks

I just want to say thank you to everyone that has penned an article for a newsletter so far. I enjoy putting this newsletter together every month, and hope you have enjoyed it, but I do not have the time, let alone the creative juices, to be the sole source of articles. If you have not written an article as yet I encourage you to do so as it is fun and you get to see your name in print, even if the readership is only a mere 15 people. The topic can be anything and poking a little fun at your fellow owners is not discouraged (but don't be too harsh). Special thanks go to both Barry and Ira who have submitted excellent articles these past two issues. Hope you all keep them coming.

Ed