

Games: 27 & 28
Date: Wed. 7/30/08
Written: Wed. 8/6/08

Sweat, Sweat and more Sweat

I have played baseball and softball in some god awful heat and humidity in my time, but these could have been some of the toughest conditions I have ever encountered. I'm sure getting older does not help, but by the time this thing was all said and done, my age really showed, for the first time that I can ever remember. My tank was just about empty before the second game started and by the end of the night I barely had enough energy to pack up and get back to the car. Mother Nature may have won the battle of weather conditions, but we won where it counted, on the field.

Game 1

Black Jacks 12
Papa O's 9

	<u>Line Score</u>							
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>T</u>
Black Jacks	2	1	2	6	0	1	0	12
Papa O's	4	0	1	0	0	4	0	9

By the time I was done stretching out and loosening up I had wiped the sweat off my face so many times already that my towel was completely soaked. I wasn't sure about anyone else, but I knew I was in for a long, long night. I was hoping, with everyone else being a lot younger than me, that they wouldn't get as affected by the heat.

For those that have been following along, we have been trying to take a doubleheader from this team since the beginning of the year. We lost both games the first time around and then split the other three. This was our last chance to prove that we could get the job done. We all knew we had the talent. It was just a matter of putting it all together.

Diamond Dave led off the game with a walk. Lee moved him to third with a single. Then Ebs brought in Dave with yet another sacrifice fly. He has to lead the world in sacrifice flies!! Two batters later DVo (previously known as Chris Dvorak...see the Coach's Corner) brought in Lee with a single for our second and final run of the inning.

Papa O's answered right back with four runs of their own. At the end of one we were down four to two.

We managed to scratch out one run in the second on an RBI single by Dave cutting the lead to one. O's came up empty in their half of the second, so they stayed up four to three.

In the third, Bones and Trice got things going with singles. Dvo brought in Bones on a ground out and I brought in Trice on an error. So, we took the lead five to four. However, that lead would not last long as Papa's tied it up with one run in their part of the third. Going into the fourth we were all tied up at five.

I'm always thinking big inning, and I knew we would need at least one of those in order to beat these guys. Dave got things going in the fourth. With one out he lined a wicked, slicing shot to right field. The ball took two very strange bounces and the right fielder got caught in between hops as the ball went right by him in the opposite direction of where he was headed. Dave came all the way home with a much needed homerun. Lee and Ebs followed with singles to put two men on. Bones then stepped up and smashed a booming triple to right center knocking in both runners, for our second and third runs of the inning. Trice followed with a single to bring in Bones. Dvo hit

into what should have been a fielder's choice but a bad throw put both runners on base. I followed with a single to center bringing in Trice. Then Franchi brought in Bones on a fielder's choice to end the scoring. When the dust had settled we pushed six runs across for an eleven to five lead.

Trice did an awesome job in shutting down Papa's in the fourth to hold our lead. Then both teams went scoreless in the fifth. So going into the sixth the score stayed eleven to five.

In the sixth we tacked on one more insurance run with Franchi's RBI single that knocked in Trice. At that point, with our bad history of giving up big leads late, we needed every run we could get.

Papa O's came right back with four big runs in the bottom of the sixth to cut our lead to twelve to nine. In the back of my mind I was hoping we could hold it together and not blow another lead.

We came up empty in the seventh. So, now it was up to pitching and defense to get the three outs we needed. They both came through as Papa's went down one, two, three giving us a much needed twelve to nine win.

Box Score

	AB	R	H	BB	2B	3B	HR	RBI
Dave LF	4	2	4	1	0	0	1	1
Lee LC	5	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Ebs SS	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Bones 1B	4	2	3	0	0	1	0	2
Trice P	4	3	4	0	0	0	0	2
Divo RC	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Pete C	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Franchi 3B	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	2
Haack 2B	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Steve RF	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Big Hitters: Dave (HR #2), Trice, Lee, Bones, Pete, Franchi

Game 2

Papa O's 15
Black Jacks 16

Line Score

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	T
Papa O's	3	0	0	3	8	0	1	15
Black Jacks	4	4	5	0	1	0	2	16

In the fifth inning of the first game, while running to first, Ebs pulled up and grabbed his right hamstring. Everyone knows that whenever someone does that, it's not good. Being the gamer that he is he stayed in the games, moving from short to first base? We knew he could not run, so I dropped him down to last in the order and made a few other changes. I moved Franchi up to the two slot; dropped Lee to the three position and changed the bottom of the order a bit by moving Steve up two slots. Did it work? Read on and you'll find out.

At this point we needed a few guys to really step up with Ebs hurting. Technically we were down to 9 1/2 players.

Papa O's got off to a quick start with three runs in the first. We needed to answer right back in order have a chance. Diamond Dave did it again leading off with a single and wound up

scoring on a bad three-base throwing error. Franchi and Lee both followed with singles to put two runners on. Then Bones stepped up and crushed a huge three-run homer to run giving us a quick four to three lead.

We held Papa's scoreless in the second, giving us a huge opportunity to widen our lead. Ebs got things going with a walk, although he didn't even have to get to first base because he couldn't run, so we put in a runner for him. Dave followed with a single to put two runners on. Franchi brought one run with a single. The Lee crushed a triple to right bringing in two more runs. Bones followed with a sacrifice fly bringing in Lee. So, at the end of two we were up eight to three.

Again Trice shut down O's with no runs in the third, giving us another chance to put some distance on the score board. With one out, Steve, Haack and Ebs hit consecutive singles, with Ebs' bringing in the first run. Dave followed with an RBI double. Franchi kept things going with a walk. Lee stepped up and singled in another run. Then Bones singled and Trice singled bringing in the final run of the inning. At the end of three we had a huge thirteen to three lead.

One of two things was going to happen. Either we were going to completely blow them out in four or five innings, or our bad habit of giving up big leads was going to take over. Unfortunately, it was the latter. Papa's came storming back with three runs in the fourth cutting our lead to thirteen to six. Then our bats went quiet, albeit at a very bad time, as we came up empty in the fourth. Going into the fifth it seemed like we were clinging to a six run lead.

I don't know what it is with us and big leads. Maybe we just relax too much or we put too much pressure on ourselves. I just cannot figure it out. We should be slamming the door shut with big leads, and all we seem to do is let the other team back in it, time and time again. This was no different, as we completely fell apart again, giving up eight runs and the lead. Going into our half of the fifth we were now down by one fourteen to thirteen.

In the fifth we managed one run, which turned out to be huge. With the bases loaded and one out, Bones hit another sacrifice fly to tie the game.

Now, it came down to a two-inning game. I think by this point the heat and humidity were really taking its toll on everyone. Someone needed a break to win this game. Papa's put up one run in top of the seventh to take a one run lead. We needed one to keep the game going and another to win. The first two batters went down. With two outs, Lee who was having a huge game, saw a hole down the right field line and went that way, winding up on second with a double. Bones stepped up with the game on the line, and proceeded to hit a line drive to left center. Both the left center-fielder and the left fielder went for it and collided. The left centerfielder not only dropped the ball he hurt his ankle pretty badly and had to be helped off the field. Bones wound up on second with a double. This gave us the break we needed, as they were down to three outfielders. T Rice stepped up with a chance to win it. And that he did with a line drive single to left center field. The final score was sixteen to fifteen.

We FINALLY swept these guys in a double header! This pushed our record on the field (not counting forfeits) to 12 & 12 and gave us some much needed momentum going into the last week of the season and the play-offs.

		Box Score							
		AB	R	H	BB	2B	3B	HR	RBI
Dave	LF	5	3	3	0	1	0	0	1
Franchi	2B	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	1
Lee	LC	5	4	5	0	0	0	1	4
Bones	SS	4	2	4	0	0	0	1	5
Trice	P	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	2
Divo	RC	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Pete	C	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Steve	RF	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
Haack	3B	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Ebs	1B	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	1

Big Hitters: [Lee, Bones \(HR #2\), Trice, Dave, Steve, Franchi, Haack](#)

Coach's Corner

Where's Marty?

Congratulations to Marty and his new wife Kristin, who got married last Friday. They are now on their two-week honeymoon in Hawaii!

New Nickname

Besides all of the Michaels we have on the team, we have two Chris's as well, which can get confusing. It's even more confusing when they are hitting right after each other in the order. As a matter of fact, it got so confusing that they accidentally hit for each other the second time up in the first game. So, it is my responsibility to put an end to that madness. And the only way to do that is to revert to nicknames. Chris Trice, who everyone calls Trice and I call T Rice or T, will no longer be referred to as Chris. Chris Dvorak now will be called DVo or Divo or Devo...or however you want to spell it. I'm going with D Vo because those are the first letters in his last name. Now stop messing up the batting order!!!

Nicknames Part II

Oh yeah, there has been confusion on how to pronounce Ken Franchi's last name. I am putting an end to that crap too. Even though I am the only one who pronounces it correctly with the "a" like the word *and*, not with a short "O"...Kenny will now be known as K Fran, just like A Rod and KRod and all those other famous nicknames.

So, we now have T Rice, D Vo and K Fran.

That's why I'm the Coach

With Ebs pulling his hamstring, I had to make some drastic moves to the lineup. Ebs is our clean-up hitter when Joe is in the lineup and three-hitter when Joe is not. The addition of Ebs' bat when he came back at mid-season has been HUGE.

With Joe not at the game and Ebs out we had a gaping hole to fill, because I had to move Ebs to the bottom of the order.

So, I moved Franchi to the two-slot, (not knowing that's where he usually hits in his other league) and dropped Lee to three. Then I moved everyone up a slot, except Steve who I moved up two slots. Why? Call it a hunch.

And what happened? Let's see. Those three players went a combined 10 for 13, with Lee leading the way going five for five with a home run and 4 RBI, his best game of the year.

Chalk one up for the coach!!

The Challenge; update

Here were the challenges I laid out from two weeks ago and last week.

1. Beat Economos
 2. Finish with an overall record of .500 or better
 3. Finish in second place in the regular season
 4. Win the play-off tournament
 5. Beat Papa O's in a double header.
- We can still beat Economos. We play them this week in the last regular season doubleheader.

- Because we swept this past week, we can still finish with an overall .500 record. We have to sweep Economos and then win both games in the tournament, to finish 16 – 16.
- We officially cannot finish in second place. But, we did make it close.
- We can DEFINITELY win the play-off tournament.
- We accomplished # 5! Well done.

Heat Aftermath

Just to give you a small idea of how hot and humid it was, here are just two things that put things in perspective.

First, I wound up with a humungous bruise on my right bicep. I was so completely out of it, I have NO idea how it got there. I had to do it during the game because it showed up the next morning. I was just so completely out of it I have zero recollection of what happened.

Second, at the end of the night, Trice took off his shirt and literally rang it out five times leaving a huge puddle of sweat at his feet. It was pretty damned funny to see, but it really shed some light on how bad the conditions were.

Comic Relief

Historically Speaking

Franchi: Just so you know, historically speaking, I bat second.

Pete: Really?

Franchi: Yep.

Pete: Well, we are going back to historically then.

Franchi: That's where I hit in our Mayhem Championship season

Pete: Then I guess I knew what I was doing.

Franchi: I thought that's what this was. The 2008 Black Jacks Championship Season

Pete: It is....historically speaking.

If There's Any Justice

Steve lined hard right back to the pitcher. Out of frustration he threw the bat towards the opening of the bench. It hit square on the pole and bounced right back at him almost hitting him.

Franchi: That bat almost hit you!

Steve: Yep

Franchi: First you line one right back to the pitcher, then you throw the bat, it hits the pole square and bounces right back at you!

Steve: If there were any justice in the world, it would have hit me square in the nuts.

A 45-Year Old's Leap

There was pop foul that went just over my head. I turned & jumped (if you want to call it that) and just missed it

Pete: I guess I needed more than my standard one-quarter inch vertical leap.

Ump: You got up in the air though.

Trice: No, no. That was a good 45-year-old's leap.

Pete: Shut Up! I'm freakin 44!

That Means You Didn't Tell Me

When I switched the order for second game, I yelled out the lineup changes. Obviously, someone wasn't listening. Lee went out to hit second, when I moved him to third.

Franchi: Hey! He's not up.
Pete: What are you doing?! Come back here!
Lee: What?
Franchi: You're not up yet.
Lee: What do you mean I'm not up yet?
Pete: You're not up. I changed the order.
Lee: Obviously you failed to tell me.
Pete: Obviously you weren't listening because I told everyone.
Lee: No, No! That's just like my wife. If she tells me something and I don't here her, then she didn't tell me. So, you didn't tell me.

The End.....

Next Games

Date: 8/6
Opponent: Economos
Times: 6:30 & 7:30

The G.M. Has Spoken.....

Pete