

THE HERMAN

Random Notes by Eddie of Utah

You are not Tiger Woods. I feel this needed to be pointed out to most of the people of this world. Lyman offered me the position of part time column writer after the end of the 1998 season, but I decided I might as well start a few now. UUUUTES!. After all, many of next years columns will be produced under a drug and/or alcohol induced haze. I am enjoying my final year in Utah, with Lou Zamuda having the greatest year any shortstop has ever had, and Holmes is scoring runs at a greater rate than he or anyone else has ever done, except for Billy Hamilton. Who knows, maybe Kermit will break Billy's record of 192.

Virgil Lane: Something to Prove

Virgil Lane's year of uncertainty may have resulted in a permanent home for the moody slugger. The Miami Stars became Virgil's 4th team in the last year, but he could soon find himself with a new long term contract if the stars keep winning and Virgil, who has 24 RBI in 35 games, keeps driving them in.

Virgil fell out of favor with El Paso in 1997 as the team hit plenty of homeruns but failed to score runs. With 34 homers but a .251 average and 27 GDP, Lane was not resigned as the devils sought to diversify their offense.

Free agency proved a strange experience. Expecting multi million dollar long term offers that never came, Virgil signed a 1 year deal with the Alaska Snow Sox. He was then traded to Portland, but didn't fit in. Bo Supreme has long preferred players with what he calls the decepticon attitude. Virgil just had plain old attitude. He was quickly moved to Miami, whose manager, RJ Duke, is quite a bit more lenient. RJ told Virgil that as long as he drives in runs, he can do whatever he wants. In Portland or Alaska, fundamentals are key. You can't skip practice, and the coaches will get on all who don't follow the rules.

In Miami, RJ is as lenient with Virgil as anyone can be. "If he wants to show up in the middle of the first inning with a bag of McDonalds food, that's fine, just as long as he's ready to hit cleanup. Virgil's defense was a problem in the major league, but RJ needed to sim him in the field for just one game before coming up with a solution. "He just butchered a few balls out there, so I said Virgil, you're going to be our full time DH. It's no big deal, we've needed a DH since we came to the superior league."

“All players need different rules to play their best. Will Spriggs or Antone Jackson, they need to give me 3 hours a day in practice. Alvin would practice all day if my coaching staff could keep up with him. The kid has nothing to prove, he knows what he needs to do to get ready. With Virgil, the way to keep him happy is to leave him alone. If he couldn't hit a ball 500 feet I would expect more work out of him, his other skills wouldn't keep him in the lineup. But its hard to find guys who can hit a ball like he can.”

Virgil has not had the easiest life. Born in the hoods of Chicago to an unwed mother, Virgil has never met his real father, just a series of “uncles”. Virgil quickly grew much bigger than the other children, and at age 12 was 6 feet tall, weighed 210, could hit a ball 425 feet and dunk a basketball. He had become the leader of his own gang and impregnated one of his teachers, who was 24 at the time, with Virgil's first child, Virgil Jr. Court records from his child support case show that his income at age 12 was over 275,000, all from illegal gang activity. Sadly, Virgil Jr was sentenced to life in prison just this past offseason for murder. Virgil hopes, in 15-20 years when parole is possible, to form a relationship with his eldest son.

Sluggers Retool:

The Louisville sluggers, winners of 6 straight and making a charge at the division lead, aquired Ben Williams from cleveland for James Morton and a player to be named. Louisville could have a new look next year, as Ryne Solo Jr is eligible for free agency. Skip Yoder has improved greatly at short , but could move to second if Louisville wants to give the shortstop job to acrobatic Will Clayton, who is the fastest player the have ever had at the position and has 5 hits in his 1st 14 at bats.