

EVERYONE'S A WINNER!

Never was the saying more true: "It's not whether you win or lose it's how you play the game." All of those participating in the Tour / Tournaments sponsored by Adventure Depot are now months removed from the tour, but I'm sure are still savoring the new PTP players they met, the new ball parks they discovered and the great time we had together. Here are some of the highlights of each of the Pursue the Pennant Tournament/Tours from 1988-1990:

METRODOME EXPRESS:

July 1988...

A mixed bag of young and old participated in the lead off tour of the 1988 campaign. We rolled out of Milwaukee's downtown Amtrak station on a warm Friday afternoon in July - about one hour behind schedule. No problem though, it just gave us more time to play PTP and enjoy the ride. The Dome-Lounge car of the Empire Builder train proved to be an ideal spot to play, as we spread out on both the upper level of the car and downstairs in the cafe' section.



Of course, everyone likes to win, but some people like to win a bit more than others. "SWEET!", chirped Curt Hanke seemingly every time anything good happened to his '87 Cardinals. By the end of the tour on Monday afternoon, we were all mocking poor Curt with "SWEET!" chants of our own. Nothing like a good ribbing for a fellow PTP player.

One of the highlights of the trip was a tour of the Metrodome. We had the chance to visit the press box, the luxury boxes and even walk out onto the field and discover for ourselves what it's like for Kirby Puckett to play center field in the Metrodome.

At the Metrodome among the partisan Twins crowd were many Brewer fans including our group of 13 which included the entire Haasch family. Brewer fans had plenty to cheer about as the "Brew Crew" came from behind to win in the 9th inning on both Saturday and Sunday sparked by none other than Brewer PTP investor Jim Gantner.

We all stayed at the Minneapolis Marriott where the Brewers were staying and it became common place to get a close look at and meet some of the players. Brewer radio broadcaster Pat Hughes dropped by and said hello to our group and congratulated tournament winner David Clausen as well. My '87 Brewers fell short in the championship game against David's Blue Jays as Jimmy Key out pitched Chris Bosio.

THREE RIVERS EXPRESS:

September 1988...

We are in the lobby of the Vista International hotel in Pittsburgh, near the outset of playing our tournament. I'm skipping the lowly '87 Dodgers and Darryl Celkupa is managing the '87 Red Sox in division three (second from the lowest level in terms of winning percentage). Down by three runs in the bottom of the ninth inning, the Dodgers have hardly been able to nick Roger Clemens all game.



Mike: "You know Darryl, there's no way I should ever win this game, but I've got to tell you what's been happening in my PTP league back home. I've had come from behind rallies that you would not believe, not once, not twice, but consistently. Miracles, absolute miracles. Well, I do have some very good players, but still I've been down big, just like this and with

two outs and nobody on and I've won it." Eighteen in a row! That's how good it's been.

Darryl: "Fly out."

Darryl: "Strike out."

(Darryl's friend Steve drops by to see what's happening with the game)

Mike: "Two down nobody out and the Dodgers are down by three runs, but this is when my team has been rallying."

Steve: (Looks at me like I'm nuts.)

Mike: "Walk?" (I said surprisedly)

Mike: "Marshall lines a base hit." O.K. Here we go." (I'm starting to feel a surge of confidence)

Mike: "Walk! Yes! Bases loaded!" (Now I'm excited as Franklin Stubbs comes to the plate.)

Darryl: (Darryl is looking very tense at this point as he breaks his pencil lead trying to score the walk.)

Mike: (In the back of my mind I'm thinking that realistically my luck has to run out with Clemens facing Stubbs, but jeez I've been hot.)

Darryl: "94 vs. a RH" (Silence.....)

Mike: TRIPLE OFF THE WALL! WE'RE TIED! IT'S AMAZING!

Darryl: "I\$@#%&!@&!" (Darryl has just crumpled back into the couch.)

Steve: "This is unbelievable!" (laughing hysterically)

(By now I've got a smile a mile wide and am also laughing hysterically. Darryl is frantically digging through his bullpen for help.)

Darryl: "I don't believe this. Look at these burns! Wes Gardner is coming in." (Darryl rolls the dice)

Darryl: "Wild Pitch chart. Oh great, Gardner's Prone." (After the inevitable wild pitch, Darryl has once again crumpled back into the couch.)

Steve and Mike: (We are both laughing hysterically again.)

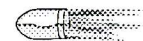
Darryl and Steve: "He said that's what has been happening and it happened!"

The finals of the tournament saw Scott Reissman's '87 Mets vs. my '87 Cardinals (I had the option of switching teams after my '87 Dodgers won the division). Well as much as I hate the Mets and love the Cardinals, I was glad to see that the outcome was in my favor two games to one. Scott proved to be a formidable foe, but my pitching held up throughout the series.

This was the only trip that did not feature a train ride. Participants flew in or drove from the New York area to watch the Mets on their way to the pennant during their weekend series over Labor Day vs. the Pirates. We saw a great see-saw game as the Mets virtually wrapped up the pennant by beating the Bucs. Three Rivers Stadium is situated in one of the most scenic areas of any park that I've seen. The confluence of the three rivers as well as the rising bluffs and numerous historic bridges make for an especially scenic setting.

BUSCH STADIUM EXPRESS:

August 1988...



Mike Mack was the youngest participant of any of the tours at eleven years of age. He also was probably the most excited. His Mom kept reminding me that Mike was getting increasingly excited about the trip. Well, Mike had a super time. In fact, his Blue Jays won the tournament! The tournament was held on our way down to St. Louis from Chicago as well as at the magnificently restored St. Louis Union Station Omni Hotel and finally on our way back to Chicago. Mike and Eli Dawson (the second youngest on the tour) made this finale a battle of young titans and captured the attention of everyone in the Cafe' car as more than a few Amtrak patrons and employees wondered what game we were playing as the action heated up.