

2023 SEASON WEEKLY RECAPS

WEEK #13 RECAP

MAGICIANS

With the upcoming playoff format leaving little for the 88s to play for during the rest of the regular season, they looked to spread a little magic while gearing up for what they hope will be another deep run.

ESCAPE ARTISTS

A lack of motivation seemed to play a part in game 1 feeling like a 2018 throwback night at times.

- Sandi threw a very rare walk.
- Hits were few and far between.
- Base running blunders.
- 3 up 3 down in the 4th and 7th.
- Throwing the ball around defensively.

This all added up to an 11-4 deficient with just 4 outs left to work with offensively in the top of the 8th.

If they were going to spark another late game rally, it would take something special.

Joce stepped up with 2 outs and no one on to crush a stand up double deep over the left fielder to give the 88s something to cheer about.

“Abracadabra bitches!” one bystander claimed to hear her yell as she rounded 1st.

Feeling inspired, Myles followed that up with his 500th career hit, an opposite field triple that he snuck home on after an over throw to fan the flames of hope.

The 88s let their opponent feel the heat by feeding the fire with 6 more straight hits and pulling to within 1 run by scoring 6 with 2 outs.

After a quick 1-2-3 bottom of the 8th thanks in part to a running catch by Myles in deep center it was back to the hot bats.

Marnie, Jeff and Nikki loaded the bases with 3 straight hits to start the inning, setting the table for John to tie the game with a sac fly before the kid who triggered the comeback gave the 88s the lead when Joce knocked in the leading run as part of a 5 run 9th, giving the 88s a 15-11 lead.

The Chuggers threatened with 4 straight hits to start the bottom of the 9th to put 2 in, 2 on with 0 out but the 88s were able to use sleight of hand to slip the win up their sleeve and make their escape.

PULLING A RABBIT OUT OF THE HAT

Playing in front of a sellout crowd of 30, the fans were treated to a back and forth, hotly contested, defensive minded nail biter.

In other words what you'd expect from a Pitches / 88s matchup.

Pitches landed the first punch with 3 runs in the top of the 1st while the 88s seemed to have trouble getting out of their corner with a 1 for 8 start at the plate and a number of uncharacteristic miss plays on D.

Missing 2 former MVPs from the lineup meant a group effort would be required to keep things close.

Jeff's back was looking strong as he hit 4/4 with a run and 3 RBI.

Both of Sandi's hits led to runs.

Josh and John had 3 hits a piece while locking down the left side of the infield.

Myles used his new opposite field trick to get things started in the bottom of the 8th before Brian knocked him in for the game winning run 2 batters later.

Marnie made the most important play on the night, a key defensive gem in the top of the 9th to snuff out a Pitches rally and help complete the magic trick with another tight 10-9 victory.

EXTRA BITS

Linda filled in and had an error free game (as scorekeeper).

88s lock up 1st place in the Borgatti division.

Not 1 of the 12 or so kids in attendance even noticed there was a game happening while playing together in their own world.

WEEK #12 RECAP

88ING

In the midst of a relatively rough patch of 3-2-1 over their last 6 games, the babes in blue were in need of a classic 88s kind of night.

TAKIN' CARE OF BIDNESS

First up was a Benchwarmers club who have been struggling to get all of their players out to games since being moved over to Tuesdays Borgatti division.

The 88s took advantage of the reduced roster early and often by getting out to a 15-1 lead after 3 innings and never looked back.

Kylie lined her 200th career hit into the outfield grass and Marnie got her attending boyfriend all excited by showing off her Hoover skills at 1B.

Joce (4/4) and Vern (3/3) each had perfect games and the 3 power bats of Josh, Brian and John combined for 14 hits and 12 of the teams 19 RBIs.

Kylie capped things off with a heads up play to gun down a runner trying to stretch a hit into a double, giving the 88s some extra time to rest before their next game.

VINTAGE

Despite the impressive 19-4 mercy win in game 1, it was game 2 of the double header when the 88s truly did 88s things.

After a hard fought and exciting 12-12 tie in their previous matchup against Sons of Pitches, this time around started much the same with the squads deadlocked at 6 in the 3rd and the 88s trailing 9-8 after 4.

Then it happened.

Despite missing several key pieces, the Pitches once again proved their depth, forcing the 88s to turn back the clock and find themselves.

Coach hit his first 2 classic Myles triples of the season, Joce continued her torrid pace with 3 more hits (5/5 for the game), Josh mashed a double and a triple.

Collectively they locked down defensively and had their biggest offensive inning of the season by scoring a fitting 8 in the 8th.

All told the 88s went on a 15-1 run over the last 4 innings to finish the game with a 23-10 win and extra breathing space in the standings.

EXTRA BITS:

Joce is now on a 10 at bat hit streak after a perfect 9/9 night.

Brian scored both the first and last runs of the 8th inning.

Myles tied the record for most runs scored in a single game (6).

John had his second career 7 RBI game.

WEEK #11 RECAP

SOMETHING MISSING

There was a bunch of 4 hit performances (John, Kylie, Brian, Nikki), only 1 walk given up (Jeff hurled on the mound with Sandi hurling at home) and a variety of impressive D (Marnie dazzled at 1B, Vern and Joce each made great running catches, Brian/John/Nikki connected on a relay to nab a runner at home) but there was a little something missing.

88s rise when all their ingredients are mixed but sometimes don't come out tasting quite as sweet without their extra scoop of flour and pinch of salt.

MIRROR DIMENSION

The style of getting down early before making a charge that the 88s have become known for was adopted and used against them very effectively.

After a solid first inning that had them up 3-1, Ump Yours pounded out back to back 6 run max innings to take a commanding 13-3 lead which they would never relinquish.

Comebacks are not new for the squad but the hole was too big against too good of an opponent.

They tried to make a game of it with a 4 run 4th thanks to 5 straight hits to start the inning but the best they could do was hold on long enough to avoid the mercy, finish down 20-11 and escape with a shred of dignity by finally stopping Ump Yours from scoring in the final inning.

MORE SMALL BALL

In a game with similar low scoring vibes as last week, the 88s and WalkOffs once again battled for 9 innings, each falling short of double digit runs.

Much of what damage they could muster was done by the 3-4-5 spots in the lineup with Brian, Nikki and John batting a combined 12/15 with 4 runs and 4 RBI.

Otherwise it was a grind offensively due in part to the WalkOffs making several exceptional plays on defense to take away hits.

Defensively it was the usual 88s with Pope ranging all over the field from short, Myles making a basket catch on the warning track and very few miscues overall.

8/8 night ended on a high.

In part because of the W in game 2 but more importantly for making a couple wide eyed youngsters proud about selling their hockey raffle tickets and for the news of a safe return for Stormy! #meow

The sigh of relief James let out could be felt all the way in Port Colborne, where the 88s look to defend their Chappy tournament crown on the weekend.

TIE-MING IS EVERYTHING

Thursday nights 9:15 game at Plymouth was not highly anticipated but it surprised and delighted!

Things were looking dour after falling behind 6-1 early against a historically great team while 3 old fucks battled an assortment of ailments including one of the leading candidates for male MVP struggling with a bum wrist, but these 88s are deep and have been making a habit of clawing back into games.

Tonight was no different.

After chipping away at the lead thanks in part to tighter defence, a Jackie burn job to deep left field and a rare perfect night at the plate from Myles, the 88s still found themselves stuck 3 heading into the bottom of the last inning.

With only 3 outs left in the game, Lucas and Joce started things off with back to back hits, setting the table for a hobbled Brian who sat down to feast with a game tying 3 run home run; a no doubter deep into the night sky!

Sons of Pitches clamped down the defence after that, ending a really fun game with a felicitous 12-12 tie.

EXTRA BITS

James is batting .1000 on the season in terms of game score challenges.

Joce surpasses 200 career hits.

Myles crosses the plate for the 300th time.

Brian surpasses 400 career hits.

There were other milestones that were missed in previous weeks. Sue me.

WEEK #10 RECAP

HOLDING ON

While standing on the edge of slipping out of first place for the first time since 2019, the 88s added even more drama by digging themselves a couple holes.

THE BATTLE FOR FIRST

Ump Yours leaned back and threw the first haymaker with a 6 run first, but like a hungry grizzly the 88s were roused from their slumber and turned the tide in a big way.

Stepping up offensively to carry the load were Sandi, Lucas and Kylie with 4 hits each and a combined 3 runs and 4 RBI.

After fighting his own mini battles with Mother Nature early on, Brian eventually pinned down that b*tch of a sun when it mattered most with a pivotal shoestring catch late in the game which he followed up with a clutch 2 out 2 run double in the top of the 9th.

All told over the final 8 innings the 88s outpaced their opponent 15-4 including a huge 6 run 9th which gave them enough separation from a dangerous predator to escape with their lives and the win to firm up their grasp of the top spot in the division.

MISSION: REDEMPTION

Next up were the upswing WalkOffs who just snapped the 88s 11 game win streak 1 week prior.

After just scoring the most runs in a loss since their final game of 2017 last week (20), this time around they scored the fewest runs in a win since June 2019 (8).

Softballs a funny game.

With an obvious lack of offensive firepower to speak of, the 88s let their defense do the talking.

With the sun now under the horizon the outfield was back to its usual self but the strength of the infield was their biggest weapon in the arsenal.

The tip of that spear was the Orion's Belt trio of Sandi on the mound flanked by Josh and Marnie at the corners.

Josh had one of his best stretches at the hot corner by making ranging scoops and pin point accurate throws look increasingly easy as the night went on.

"That's my Daddy!" - Zach (also Joanne later that night probably)

Marnie had her mama on the edge of her seat watching her daughter complete out after out at 1B including the 3 most important in the top of the 9th to help seal the deal.

"You go girl!" - Ms. Linda Margaret Lambert

Sandi used her cat like reflexes to snag a hard liner up the middle, didn't walk a batter all night, was in the right spot to back up throws every time and made an impressive final out on a dribbler in front of home plate to nab a speedy runner and send her team home happy.

No quote available. Being as old as Sandi most of her family is sadly long since passed.

The WalkOffs defense traded blows all game to keep it tight but the 88s did just enough offensively to come away with a hard fought 8-6 victory for a perfect 2-0 evening.

WEEK #9 RECAP

BROKEN

So often is the case that the older something gets the easier it becomes to break.

A winning streak and human body are much the same in this way.

HAVE MERCY

First, game 1 saw the 88s extend their winning streak to 11 straight games with a decisive 18-6 W on the back of strong offensive performances from 3 J's; John (6/6 and scored every time), Josh (6/6 and record tying 8 RBI) and Jackie (4/4 + 3 runs + 2 RBI).

All in all it was pretty tame, perhaps the calm before the storm.

NO SERIOUSLY, HAVE MERCY

While game 1 finished as a mercy in favour of the 88s, it was game 2 that almost had them crying uncle after a multitude of physical mishaps that started before the first pitch was even thrown.

An ill Kylie was replaced in the lineup by a sick James after the 88s were left short by a vacationing Myles, busy Vern and a working Lucas and Piluso who couldn't make it to fill in.

After "play ball" was called, things got even worse.

Whether it was Marnie rolling an ankle while ranging for a fly ball behind first base, Nikki taking a throw above the neck while scoring from third or Sandi colliding with a first baseman it seemed like one thing after another.

Perhaps feeling a bit understandably rattled collectively, the 88s usual brick cheese defense was turned into Swiss and gave up 25 runs, the most since 2018 and the 3rd most given up in franchise history.

It was a sour way for their winning streak that began in May to come to an end, but decay is essential for an ecosystem to feed new life.

It wasn't all bad for the 88s in game 2.

Every player got at least 2 hits and John and Josh beefed up their application for the speedy Gonzalez club by both hustling out an inside the park home run at the smaller Memorial 1 field.

WEEK #8 RECAP

TAKE 2

After Zeus and Thor saved them from what was looking like an epic beat down last week at the hands of the Beer Chuggers, the 88s had a chance for a do over that they were hoping not to squander.

Despite what the season series may look like so far, the margin between these two friendly rivals remaining very thin was evident by the 88s clinging to a 2-1 lead after the 5th.

The story of this game was told early by the 88s bend but don't break defense.

The Beer Chuggers were constantly threatening with 13 hits during the first 4 innings but thanks to timely defense, including Sandi's snag of a hard come backer with the bases loaded, the 88s held strong and managed to escape both raspberry and strawberry jams.

After a slow start offensively, the 88s poured in 2 in the 6th and 8th and 5 in the 7th to pull away late and come away with their 9th straight win.

3RD LONGEST WINNING STREAK IN FRANCHISE HISTORY

With every second week being rained out since the start of June and a few narrow victories mixed in, it's easy to overlook a sneaky impressive 10 game win streak.

The latest scare came at the hands of the Benchwarmers who once again came out strong early and proved they're not to be toyed with.

After the Warmers laced liners all over the field to take a 2-1 lead after the first, the 88s responded with back to back 6 run innings and never looked back.

Fueled by a trifecta of inside the park solo home runs (Myles, Jeff, John) and 4+ hits from Joce (5), Lucas, Josh, Brian, Kylie and Marnie the 88s offense put up a season best 23 runs.

While Hudson dazzled on the makeshift soccer field behind the backstop, his Mama was busy throwing a lolly pop toss quick rocker over to first to complete a game ending double play.

EXTRA BITS:

Marnie comes home early from her ~~performance enhancing stem cell procedure in Germany~~ "family vacation" to have one of her best nights as an 88 (7/10 + 4 runs + 3 RBI).

Jeff scores his 300th career run, the first 88 to accomplish the feat.

Joce gets her 5th 5 hit game of her career and the first in 2023.

Jackie was a Swiss Army knife by playing admirably in all defensive positions.

WEEK #7 RECAP

There was something in the air tonight and it wasn't just the wildfire smoke.

Playing their first games in 2 weeks, everything was a grind with nothing coming easy.

THROW BACK TO '22

In what felt like a page torn out of the Titan battle that was the 2022 finals, the Beer Chuggers and 88s went back and forth in a hard fought 8 inning clash.

After being shut out in their first two matchups of the season the rejuvenated Chuggers put an end to that streak early by knocking in a quick 4 runs in the top of the first with the 88s answering with 5 of their own in the bottom half.

Finding themselves down 11-8 after the 4th with their bats not lighting it up, the 88s had to lean even harder on their reliably strong defense.

Myles ended an inning with a sliding catch to save a hit but the highlight of the night went to Brian who made a game saving inning ending catch of his own in the top of the last inning to keep a runner at third base and the score tied at 11 apiece.

All told, the 88s didn't let in another run after the 4th while only giving up 3 hits which helped set the stage for Verns heroics.

After Nikki led off the inning with a clutch full count walk and Myles and Brian followed that up with singles to load the bases, Vern stepped up and knocked in the winning run to help the 88s steal the walk off victory.

The ball only left the infield once during the inning but sometimes a little small ball can get the job done.

Offensively the middle of the guys order supplied most of the fuel with John, Myles and Brian combining for 14 hits (14/15) and 11 RBIs. On the ladies side it was the top 3 in the order with multi-hit games from Sandi, Marnie and Joce.

UNDEFEATED NO MORE

After an undefeated first half of the season the Benchwarmers earned their way into the Borgatti division and quickly showed why they were 12-0-1 coming into the game by giving a full strength 88s squad fits while not being at full strength themselves.

Tied 2-2 after 5, the 88s were forced to dig deep into their bag of tricks.

Their trademark defense was able to keep it close long enough for their bats to wake up late to pour in 15 runs over the final 4 innings to take this one 17-4, a game much closer than the final score says.

Offensively it was Marnie (3 hits + RBI), Nikki (4/4) and Vern (3 hits + run) leading the way for the ladies and the combination of Jeff (5 hits + 4 runs) and John (4 hits + 5 RBI) for the guys.

They had major scares on the night, but did just enough to come away with 2 wins and extend their winning streak to 8 and their record to 11-2.

EXTRA BITS:

- Jeff becomes the first 88 with 500 career hits after leading off the game with a sharp liner over short.
- Scarlett supplied Lucas with the power of the purple scrunchie (0/3 without it, 3/3 with it in game 2)
- 88s give up their first max run inning on defense after the Beer Chuggers put across 6 during the 4th

WEEK #6 RECAP

“-3 J’s, +2 W’s”

In a week that saw them missing two powerhouses on the field (Joce, Josh) and integral off field support (James), the remaining 88s had to step up and deliver.

BENT BUT NEVER BROKEN

The defense was shaky at times, including a few atypical plays on the far left side of the diamond early in each game.

Seeing this, an exasperated (*adjective: intensely irritated and frustrated*) Marnie dug deep for a play saving scoop at first base which stopped the bleeding and seemed to right the ship.

Thanks to other defensive highlights like Vern’s inside the park home run stealing knock down in center, John’s ranging over the shoulder catch in shallow left field and Jackie’s turn 2 double play, the 88s tightened up the D when it was needed to hold their opponents to just 3 and 5 runs respectively.

WEEK OFF BUT NO RUST

It felt like the 88s offense didn’t skip a beat after last week's rainout.

Nikki made a speedy return to the lineup after smashing her face in an unsanctioned event earlier in the month only to smash a fantastic 7/9 + 3 runs + RBI stat line, good for one of her best nights as an 88.

Playing with a sore arm, Brian still managed to have a perfect 10/10 night with 5 runs and 4 RBI. He also caught some balls in the outfield.

Despite these stand out performances, it was the 2 remaining regular J's that stole the show at the plate; ~~Jerk and Junk~~ John and Jeff.

John set the tone in game 2 with an incredible opposite field rocket that was as close to a no doubter inside the park home run as you can get which he then followed up with a reverse cycle (3B, 2B, 1B), 6 hits total in the game and 9 overall.

After a 5/5 game 1, Jeff delivered the game 2 clincher; a 2 out bases clearing 3 run double deep to center field which was the exclamation mark for what ended up being a 2-0 / +25 night for the 88s.

They look to get back at full strength next week with all J's available. Which will be much needed against the 2 team's closest behind them in the standings.

EXTRA BITS:

Jackie accomplishes a debut hat trick with a hit, RBI and run scored in her very first career 88s plate appearance.

Jeff now sits just 1 hit shy of 500 on his career.

WEEK #5 RECAP

"CONTAGION"

They say hitting is contagious.

That may be true, but the pathogen that's been ripping its way through the 88s locker room lately has been one of the defensive variety.

This week's patient zero was Sandi who introduced the germ by starting a tone setting double play in the first inning (completed on the backend by Lucas and Marnie) to go along with her complete game 0 walk performance on the mound, her second in as many weeks.

From there the virus spread to John who sneezed out a ranging over the shoulder catch in shallow left field and several impressive stops and throws over to first.

The strain really started to make headlines in the 5th.

As the Chuggers threatened with runners on 2nd and 3rd and no outs, it was clear Lucas caught the bug when he was seen gliding in to make a sick shoe string catch in left field to save 2 runs who then passed it on to Myles who made a sliding inning ending catch of his own to help preserve the shutout.

All told the 88s gave up just 7 hits and 0 runs without a single error in the infield against one of the top teams in the league. Truly incredible stuff. Someone call a doctor.

Offensively it was equally a team effort with every player batting in at least 1 of their 13 total runs.

Joce knocked in her 100th and 101st career RBIs with a patented bomb triple to deep left field for her team leading 2 RBI on the night (matched by Kylie).

Myles did a solid job in the leadoff spot by going 4/4, all extra base hits.

Pope continued building an impressive campaign with his own perfect 3/3 night, all doubles, each leading to runs.

After Sons of Pitches and Ump Yours fought to a stalemate in the night cap, this left the 88s standing alone at the top of the Borgatti standings with a 7-2 record.

EXTRA BITS:

Three cheers for Jeff's impressive 25 at bat hit streak that finally came to an end with his first out of the season, falling just 3 hits shy of breaking the all-time franchise record.

Several of the 88s looked extra sexy in their fresh jerseys and new caps thanks to team manager James!

Marnie doubles her RBI total while Jeff's batting average drops to a pathetic .962

WEEK #4 RECAP

"VINTAGE"

Facing two of the top teams in the division, the 88s chose the perfect night to fire on all cylinders.

RECIPE FOR A SHUTOUT

Combine one table spoon of rare off night from the Chuggers with a scoop of the 88s playing at their best and what comes out after an hour and a half of baking in the summer heat is the 88s third franchise shutout victory, this time against by far the toughest opponent of the 3.

To sweeten the pie, Kylie threw in a sprinkle of 5/5 and John added a dash of 2 run inside the park home run.

The 88s were evidently not in a sharing mood while they enjoyed their dessert, giving up only 6 hits on defense, the stingiest performance in franchise history, thanks to Sandi's usual excellent pitching (a complete game shutout) and high level defense in all positions behind her.

EVEN THE SEASON SERIES

After the Pitches pinned them down in their first matchup, a 10-4 loss on May 16th, the 88s got off the mat and redeemed themselves with 33 team hits and an impressive total of 19 runs, the most given up by Sons of Pitches so far this season.

After John's tailing rocket deep in CF was impressively chased down by Thor on a dead sprint to maintain a narrow 6-5 Pitches lead the 88s of weeks 1-3 may have crumbled. Not on this night.

Thanks to stellar top to bottom defense of their own, the 88s held strong and kept the game close enough long enough for their offense to explode for 14 runs over the final 5 innings.

Leading the way offensively were:

Josh (6/6 + 4 runs + 2 RBI)

Sandi (4 hits + 4 runs)

Jeff (6/6 + 4 runs + 7 RBI - *tied for second most in a game all time*)

John (5 hits + run + 5 RBI)

Their legs may be cramped and sore the day after, but when they see themselves at the top of the standings after month 1 of the season they'll know it was worth it.

EXTRA BITS:

Marnie had her best night of the young season with 5 hits and her first RBI to go along with exceptional stand out defense at 1B in both games.

Myles finally achieves his goal of leading the league in a statistical category (getting doubled off at first base)

The 88s maintain their 61 inning streak of not giving up the 6 run max on defense.

Big shout out to Harvey for being a great sport by honoring the bet from last year's finals. He looks good in white and blue!



WEEK #3 RECAP

"SPLITSVILLE. POP: 88s."

While enjoying the relaxing vibes of the first warm summer night of the season, the 88s seemed overly chill early on.

WEAK START

What do the prairies, Kristen Stewart and the 88s game 1 performance have in common?

Flatness.

If it wasn't coach dropping a lazy fly in the outfield to help fuel a 3 run first by Ump Yours it was the 4 normally reliable 88 batters combining to hit 4/19 with 1 run scored.

Maybe it was the missing presence and on field talents of the Henderson's, but all told it was one of the 88s more lackluster offensive performances.

Their only offense over the first 5 innings was Myles' 2 run little league "home run" in the 3rd.

With it coming against an opponent who requires 0 help to be very dangerous, it's actually surprising it ended up being as close as it was.

While the 88s offense sputtered, their timely defense kept it close thanks to a Pope - Lucas - Marnie double play in the 2nd followed by another in the 5th between Josh and Lucas.

Joce and Sandi both used their hustle to help sneak across a couple of the 4 game tying runs in the 7th but that would be the end of the scoring for the 88s.

After Ump Yours put across 1 in the 8th and another 2 in the 9th, the 88s loaded the bases with 1 out in their half of the 9th but couldn't get the hits when they needed them the most and fell by an 11-8 final to slip to 3-2 on the season.

STRONG FINISH

Next up were the struggling Flaming Moe's who came in looking for their first win of the young season.

A confusing and controversial infield fly early in the game resulted in John breathing some rare fire which he used to ignite the bomb he launched during his next at bat as part of a 4/4 + home run + 3 run + 6 RBI game.

In fact, the 3 J's (Joce, John, Josh) combined to bat 12/12 + 10 runs + 11 RBI.

The 88s defense did enough to contain the often potent Moe's lineup, making it 45 straight innings to start the year where the 88s gave up less than the 6 run max.

Needing one last run to seal the deal, it was Sandi coming up clutch.

After out running deaths reach by beating Covid she carried the momentum into a walk off mercy game winning hit to finish the 88s week off on a high note.

The 88s now sit at 4-2 on the year.

It doesn't get any easier for the 88s with the 1st and 2nd place teams next up on the schedule.

EXTRA BITS:

With an assist from Joce, Kylie crosses the 100 career run plateau with 6 on the night.

Darren had a solid 88s debut vs. Flaming Moe's with 2 hits + run + RBI.

Myles gets his 50th home on for his career, perhaps the least impressive of them all but mama loves all her babies.

Nikki's modeling career limited to being the "before" person for the next few weeks.

WEEK #2 RECAP

"NEW SEASON, NEW CHALLENGES."

After fighting their way through the last two regular seasons relatively unscathed, the 2023 campaign is already living up to its tougher expectations.

Suffering their first loss in game 3 of the season after going undefeated in 2021 and not losing their first game until June 27th in 2022 is a new feeling for the modern 88s, but an experience and challenge they relish.

"It's more fun to lose by a few than win by 30." Coach Myles said during the post-game press conference. "Win or lose, competitive games is what we enjoy the most."

LITTLE MARGIN FOR ERROR

In the past, the 88s could survive a few mistakes and still pull out wins on the back of their talent and depth.

However with a realigned division stacked with top tier opponents, things may be a little less forgiving this time around.

The tougher environment was on full display in game 1 when the 88s uncharacteristically ran into 4 outs on the base paths.

Was it merely a collection of mental miscues or more about being slow to adjust to the heightened level of competition? Either way it contributed to stifling their offense, leaving them holding just 4 runs by the end of the game, their lowest haul since August 2019.

Historically Sons of Pitches have been known by another name, Hoarders of Outs because they rarely give any away.

Generosity isn't the only thing they lack.

After 9 innings of testing, no weak links in their chain could be found. The 88s will look to deploy a philosophy that Vern an anonymous source says has served her well in the past: "when in doubt, just keep tugging".

If the 88s have aspirations of a championship trilogy, they'll need to tighten up the screws. Luckily they have a whole summer to figure it out between skinny dips and cup flips.

BATS WAKE UP LATE

After the slap in the face wakeup call in game 1, the 88 bats rolled out of bed and got to work in game 2.

Led by 4 hits apiece from Joce and Vern, the 88s finished game 2 with a combined .750 batting average (30/40, the teams 4th best team BA of all time) against a talented Ump Yours squad.

Thanks to hitting the 6 run limit in the 1st, 2nd (no outs recorded) and 4th innings, the 88s recorded just 10 outs as a team across 6 innings.

NEW VANTAGE POINT

After just 2 weeks into the season, the 88s find themselves looking up at 1st place for the first time since before the pandemic.

This season will be a new chapter for the 88s, one they're excited to keep writing.

EXTRA BITS

The franchise record vs. Sons of Pitches now sits at 6-4 all time.

Lucas takes part in his first 88s double play of his young career after scooping, touching and tossing from 3B to Marnie at 1B.

Jeff knocked in 7 RBI (good for over 30% of the team's total production on the night) but got saddled with his first L on the mound in the modern era of the 88s.

If she survives, Sandi is expected to come off the Covid list for week 3.

After slow starts in week 1 for John and Marnie, John bounced back with a 6/7 + run + 4 RBI night.

WEEK #1 RECAP

“VERSATILE AND DANGEROUS.”

On a cold opening night the only thing keeping the 88s warm were their hot ~~beds~~ bats.

It didn't start out great.

Coach bonehead tried to sabotage the season opener by getting doubled off on a Sandi liner in the top of the 1st but the 88 offense derailed his plans by maxing out 6 runs with 2 outs to set the tone for what would become an impressive offensive night for the squad.

The two highly touted off season signings lived up to the hype.

Both Veronica aka Vern (6/8, 3 runs, 4 RBI) and Lucas aka Glide (7/8, 5 runs, 5 RBI) fit right in on and off the field and their ability to excel in every defensive position was evident right away.

Veteran Josh had one of his best nights of his 88 career.

He not only batted 8/9 with 5 runs and 4 RBI but he also pitched 3 close out innings for the save in game 2 and was involved in both defensive highlights of the night; a great relay between Brian - Josh - Nikki to nab a runner at home in game 1 and a 6-4-3 double play between Lucas - Josh - Kylie in game 2.

Other notable offensive performances include:

- Jeff (9/9, 3 runs, 5 RBI)
- Joce (7/8, 5 runs, 5 RBI)
- Brian (8/8, 5 runs, 5 RBI)
- Myles (7/8, 6 runs, 2 RBI)
- Marnie

We're off and running!

Although Old Fashioned Walk Offs were not at full strength (9 player defense, missing several players due to injury) it was still important to get off to a strong 2-0 start in what will no doubt be a tougher season thanks to stiffer competition and a run cap limiting the 88s big innings.

2023 SEASON PREVIEW

“HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL.”

After battling through two hard fought playoff series' to win their second straight league championship in 2022, the 88s come into the new season looking to achieve a rare 3-peat.

It's not going to be easy.

Driven by fresh leadership, the WSL has expanded to include 3 new co-ed teams but an even more impactful change for this season comes in the form of balanced divisions.

Gone are the days of playing teams based on schedule preference or where team names are in the alphabet.

The 88s join 5 others in the newly formed Borgatti division, a murderers row of powerhouse teams.

- **88s:** back to back champions
- **Beer Chuggers:** runner up 2 years in a row who beat the 88s 3 times in 2022
- **Flaming Moe's:** snapped the 88s undefeated streak
- **Old Fashioned Walk-Offs:** pushed the 88s to the brink during last seasons semi finals
- **Sons of Pitches:** as potent and talented a roster you'll find anywhere
- **Ump Yours:** won 29 games during the 2022 season

There will be no gimmies this year.

Every game will require the 88s at their full strength best if they want to win.

Reinforcements are on the way.

("On your left.")

To help juice up the clubhouse, the 88s signed multiple highly sought after free agents during the off season.

Veronica Brooks has made her long awaited signing with the 88s to step off the bench and into a full time position. She brings her career .500 BA and 1 RBI per game pedigree to finally give the 88s their 6th full time lady and a super star utility player on defense.

Lucas Rioux signs fresh out of school and looks to make an immediate impact as a rookie. With a strong background of playing hardball, he's proven he knows the game well and will give the 88s a boost to their team speed and defensive flexibility.

Two more speedy young guns have been added to the roster to give the 88s a deeper well to draw from when needed.

Darren DiMarco and Melissa Borowski sign on to make this year's 88s roster the most talented and well-rounded in franchise history.

Don't forget the vets.

The new signings make for attention grabbing icing, but all 11 core players from last years squad returning this season is what gives rise to the moist cake.

Speaking of moist, Jeff Henderson (winner of the best batting performance award 3 years running) appears ready to take the leap in 2023.

"Playoff Jeff is what you'll see all season long. I've been jacking it all winter, I mean I've been getting jacked all winter."

Last year's MVP Joce Hunter has her eyes on the big prize.

"Holding 5 batting records is nice (oh you didn't know? check the stats bitches), but holding championships is nicer."

While 2 time MVP Brian Chandler may be looking for his own personal 3-peat.

*"My back is f*cked from carrying the team so often but I'll be ready to go in May."*

Coach was asked to reflect on this year's squad and his excitement was palpable.

"Despite the success the franchise has been lucky enough to have lately; it actually feels like we're finally full. We have 12 core roster players for the first time and with a few great options in reserve we seem to have more weapons than ever."

When asked to make predictions for 2023, he was a little more cryptic.

"I have all the confidence in the world of my players. If we stay healthy and play to our potential we should be in the mix come September."

Blank page. Clean slate.

The accomplishments last season mean nothing going into a new season. Everyone starts 0-0. Winning the off season can often mean very little in terms of winning the real season.

The 88s remain a contender, but with a more ruthless gauntlet to fight through in 2023, it feels like the most wide open field in years.

Hope springs eternal on baseballs opening day.