

# 2024 SEASON WEEKLY RECAPS

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## WEEK #15 RECAP

### BLOOD, SWEAT AND GUTS

On a late hot summer night the OddBalls and 88s found themselves in what felt like an inevitable situation.

After deadlocking in the regular season with 1 win apiece and an even +/-, the two brigades in blue were ready to lock horns in a win or go home best of 3 semifinal series.

Stepping into battle with several players coming off a lengthy hiatus to face off against a fantastic opponent, the 88s would have to do something really special if they hoped to extend their season.

### GAME 1 - GRINDING IT OUT

Facing deficits in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th and 6th innings while sputtering offensively the 88s were left with only one option; try and win ugly by any means necessary.

Led by Joce's perfect 4/4 + 3 run + 4 RBI effort they were able to grind out just enough runs on offense and battled hard enough on defense over the first 5 innings to keep the game close long enough for them to set off one of their patented explosive innings when it was needed the most, down 11-8 in the bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup>.

After a close call at 2B gave them their first out of the inning, Kris, Joce, Josh and Nikki rubbed 4 hits together to start a fire that Jes and Myles spread with back to back 2 out doubles to swing the momentum in their favor and give the 88s a 3 run lead of their own heading into the 7th and final inning.

Sticking close to the game plan, the 88s stayed calm, calculated and conservative in the top of the 7th to help them narrowly escape with a 1 run victory, carving out a 1-0 edge in the series and putting them on the brink of a finals berth.

### GAME 2 - SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL

Things started off very well for the 88s.

They began the game by putting up 3 runs in the top of the first and followed that up with 3 straight impressive grabs in the bottom half; Brian tracking down a ball in deep LF, Kelley-Ann snagging the hardest hit ball of the night at 2B and Myles capping things off with a sliding catch in shallow CF.

However the story written about this game came with an early plot twist; the sudden loss of a main character in chapter 2.

Shaken by the scream of anguish from Brian trying to leg out an infield hit to start the second inning, a concerned silence spread over the park.

After some lower lip biting and an exchange of worried looks, the 88s Taylor Swifted their emotions, wrapped their minds around the new situation and dug even deeper into their bag of will and tricks.

Following the loss of their 2 time male MVP, as they watched their lead shrink to just 1 in the 3rd while trying to hold things together with a 3 person outfield, a lesser team might have buckled and folded but not these 88s and not on this night.

Perhaps inspired by a hobbled Brian still managing to swing a 2/2 + a sac fly post injury stat line, John and Myles each blasted a home run, while Kris had 4 straight hits and Nikki came up clutch twice to lead the charge towards an 18 run / +10 barrage to finish the mini 2 game sweep.

While the offense got the headlines, it was their defense that sold the papers.

Whether we're talking about Kris' wife Kelley-Ann's grab, Myles, John and Nikki taking a ball from the outfield fence and delivering it home for a key out late in the game or Josh and Marnie's incredible double play connection from third to first, it was once again their defense proving itself to be the backbone of this franchise.

## **SPOTLIGHT**

Big players come up big when it matters the most and while every 88s' contribution to the outcome was crucial, I would be remiss if we didn't give some extra shine to a few special performances.

Let's call them the J-squad.

Jes made her return to the lineup after a 70 day stint on the DL to play a pivotal role. After knocking off some early rust, she finished the night with 2 complete game wins on the mound and fittingly made the final out of the night.

John had one of his greatest performances as an 88 in game 2 by showing off impressive range at SS while hitting for the cycle and collecting 5 total hits, 4 runs and 5 RBIs on offense. All while not killing a single pitcher.

Josh turned back the clock and drank from the fountain of youth to get down and dirty all over the field. Him repeatedly putting his body on the line to put the 88s in better positions on both sides of the ball was inspiring. On top of those intangibles, he also looked just as good on paper by batting 6/8 with 4 extra base hits, 5 runs, 2 RBI and even tossed in his first walk of the season (2nd career) to stuff the stat sheet.

Finally, the best for last, the girl who deserves all the flowers, the Wonder Woman of the 88s, Joce Hunter. She set the tone for the night by blasting stand up triples in each of her first 2 at bats and didn't slow down until they turned out the lights. She finished the night tied for the most hits (7/9) including 3

triples, 6 runs and 7 RBI while playing the outfield all night and pinch running several times. She was even digging foul balls out of the bushes; this chick can do it all.

If these two teams played the same two games 100 times in other dimensions the results would have been different in dozens of cases. Luckily for the 88s they exist in the universe where they were able to come out on top and keep the fun alive.

This team is something special and now they have a chance to do something special next week.

Let's go!

#### **EXTRA BITS**

The first thing we should do when we hire a medical team is give them all a raise.

We scored during every inning of game 2.

Joce finally joins the K club for the first time since 2022.

The title of this write-up is accurate. Several players were left bleeding after the game, while every player got a sweat going and showed a ton of guts.

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#### **WEEK #14 RECAP**

##### **COASTAL VIEWS**

With the #1 seed locked up and most of the family reunited after summer vacations, the 88s enjoyed a week of views from the top as they coasted down the stretch of the regular season.

##### **RISING EXPECTATIONS**

Low Expectations showed obvious signs of improvement from where they began earlier in the year but the 88s were still able to hold them down for a convincing 19-5 victory on a chilly August eve.

Kris pitched his second gem of the season in front of another strong defensive showing highlighted by two impressive double plays (John's spinning turn at 2B followed by Marnie's scoop at 1B and Jordan's snag at 3B before doubling off a runner at 1B).

Offensively it was Nikki (2 runs, 2 RBI) and Joce (3 runs, 5 RBI) leading the way with a near record 5 hits apiece.

On the guy's side it was Kris (4/4) and Jordan (4/4) having perfect games themselves while Myles stroked his 2nd ding dong over the fence.

##### **WAKE UP CALL**

What happens when you combine a surging Saved by the Balls squad with a coasting 88s? You get a win streak snapping loss, just in time to be woken up for the playoffs.

Now winners of 4 in a row and just coming off a crucial win over Nice Snatch, SBTBs continued their quest for the top division in playoffs by handing the 88s just their second loss of the season.

Nikki and Marnie gave the 88s a slim 1-0 lead after 2 but the longer the game remained close the more hopeful and inspired SBTBs became. Before they knew it, the 88s were down 15-4 in the 5th.

They eventually found their rhythm and scored 8 runs over the final 2 innings, but it was too little too late and they fell 16-12, ending their winning streak at 12 (their 3<sup>rd</sup> longest in franchise history).

One key difference in the game was that the 2 home runs hit by SBTB were with 2 outs and 2+ base runners while the 88s' homers (from Kris and Myles) were both solo shots. Another was consistency, with 2 of the 88s batters going hitless while all SBTB batters had at least 1 hit.

### **FINISHING STRONG**

Capping off their regular season with a bounce back 20-6 mercy win that only required 4 turns at bat was a nice palette cleanser.

Every 88 contributed in the cause, led by:

Lucas 3/3 + 3 runs + 3 RBI as part of his overall perfect night at the plate and in the field.

Joce 3/3 + 3 runs + 3 RBI

Brian 3/3 + 2 runs + 4 RBI

Marnie's taco fueled line drives

Josh's strong D and pitching while chipping in 3 hits + run + 3 RBI

Kelley-Ann and Nikki with 3 hits apiece and strong defense.

They finish the regular season with an impressive 20-2 record, granting them the top seed and a first round bye.

They now play Hungry Hungry Hippos while waiting to see who their semifinal opponent will be.

### **EXTRA BITS**

Myles continues to make friends with his lack of restraint on the base paths.

John continues to make friends with his refusal to pull the ball.

Jeff considers opening up an Italian restaurant that specializes in meatballs.

Kelley-Ann and Kris start a sketch comedy show where they continuously forget to pick each other up between innings.

88s score max 7 runs without recording an out in their last at bats of the regular season - can't go into the playoffs any hotter than that! :)

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## **WEEK #13 RECAP**

### **PHEW!**

Missing more than half the roster would be a death nail for most teams, but when your "bench" consists of multiple former MVPs, an all-time best fill in and a handful of rising stars, there's plenty of life left.

### **SCARE TACTICS**

It seemed like the 88s had a case of the Mondays in their first game of the week.

After 1 inning they let in more runs (4) than their opponent scored against them total in each of their first two matchups (2 and 3 respectively).

If it wasn't for Mel highlighting her 88s debut with a clutch 2 out single in the first and a catch deep in center during the 3<sup>rd</sup>, things could have become even more frightening than they already were by being down 6-2 heading into their half of the 3rd inning.

However after some momentum swinging defense by Lucas' running grab in CF and John's multiple snags at short stop, the 88s were able to start clawing their way out of the hole.

Helping dig was Casey putting up 2 hits, 2 runs and 2 RBI, Kris with an impressive solo inside the parker that helped kick start a crucial 5 run inning to highlight his 4/4 night and Josh with a 3/3 night including perhaps the world's slowest and most casual double in softball history.

The exclamation point came in the 6th off Myles' bat with a rare blast to the opposite field for a 2 run inside the park home run.

The 88s put it all together to pull away late, extending their winning streak to a season best 9 in a row.

### **CLINCH-VILLE. POPULATION: 88s.**

The Thunder lived up to their namesake by booming shot after shot all over the field leading to the 88s defense (that has only been letting across an average of 6.6 runs per game so far this season) to give up a season high 17 runs.

However the 88 bats came with some pop and smash themselves and were up to the task of keeping pace under the bright lights.

Check out some of these stats in no particular order:

Brian: 5/5 + 3 runs + 3 RBI

Casey: 4/4 + 4 runs + RBI

Jordan: Mammoth solo shot + inside the park home run (nearly followed by another inside the parker his next at bat)

Kelley-Ann: 2 hits, 2 runs, 2 RBI

Myles: 4/4 + 4 runs + 2 RBI

Cindy: 4 RBI (and walkless pitching)

Josh: 4/4 + 2 runs + 3 RBI (including 2 opposite field doubles to cross up the D)

Defensively there weren't a whole lot of opportunities to slow down the opponent's juggernaut offense but they were able to take advantage of the few chances they were given to make pivotal plays when it mattered the most.

The best example came in the 5th with runners at their corners and having already let in 5 runs on 0 outs. The 88s were looking for a morale victory of keeping the damage to fewer than the max 7 runs.

They did 1 better.

Cindy saved her shin from a come backer on the mound which she spun into an incredible 1-6-2 double play, turned by John at two and completed by Casey at the plate to help snuff out a late rally by the Thunder.

After the 88s put up a couple valuable insurance runs with 2 outs in their top of the final inning, the Thunder divided the lead by 2 lead in the bottom half with a 3 run home run.

However now with the bases cleared and 2 outs, all that they needed was a cherry to go on top which John provided with his sliding catch in the stone behind 2B to end the game, but his tough skin failed to offer some appropriately colored red for the occasion.

One of their toughest and most impressive wins on the season clinches the top spot in the standings, making next week's final 3 games an opportunity to fine tune some things before heading into the playoffs.

#### **EXTRA BITS**

STAT OF THE WEEK: The 88s managed to score at least 1 run in every inning. 13 straight innings with at least 1 run overall, a streak that began after their first every back to back 3 up 3 downs on offense.

Kris and Jordan both join the in and out club by becoming the second and third players this season with at least 1 home run out of the park and 1 home run inside the park. Jordan is the only player to

accomplish the feat in one game this season (maybe ever, remind me to look back sometime to scratch my curiosity).

Two max 7 run innings against Thunder.

Every player with at least 1 RBI against Thunder.

The .725 team batting average against Thunder was the 6th best in franchise history.

Special thanks to the 3 Li's - Linda, Lisa and Liz (McKenney) for handling scorekeeper duties this week.

Even BIGGER thanks once again to so many wonderful ringers we called in to get us through a week I was worried about since the schedule was released. We made it through without forfeiting AND managed to keep the winning streak alive (now into double digits with 10).

LFG!!!

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## **WEEK #12 RECAP**

### **DOUBLING DOWN**

Despite scoring the second most runs in a game this season (led by John's one man production army with a season best 6 RBI while scoring every time he got on base) this game could have been a lot tighter had it not been for many impressive (and often timely) double plays on defense to squash the opponents rallies.

Josh (who went 3/3 + 2 runs and 5 RBI at the plate himself) led the way in the clutch 2 out play category by ending several bases loaded jams early on. John, Marnie and Casey also contributed to the DP pile.

These pivotal defensive plays were much needed because after putting up back to back 6 run max innings to start the game, the 88 bats went ice cold with back to back 3 up 3 downs in the 3rd and 4th to keep the game interesting.

### **SUPER SUBS TO THE RESCUE**

Not only did they step up to save the 88s from the clutches of forfeiture, they also played an integral role on the field to help capture the victory.

A season debuting Casey (4/4, run, RBI), Jordan (3/4, 3 runs, 3 RBI) and Sandi (3/4, run) combined to bat 10/12 and had 0 errors in the field along with a couple K's from Sandi on the mound.

The 88s are like an ensemble rock band who takes turns sharing the spotlight. Tonight that spotlight had to be huge to fit in everyone on stage that deserved their shine.

The 88s have now won 9 straight games (their 4<sup>th</sup> longest winning streak in franchise history), inch closer to the edge of clinching the top seed and look ahead to perhaps their biggest test of the season as they face off against 2 other top 4 teams while being down 80% of their core ladies.

#### **EXTRA BITS**

With both Joce and Brian missing their first game of the season, the iron race now becomes a 5 way tie.

One of the double plays made on defense was a game ender in the 7<sup>th</sup>.

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#### **WEEK #11 RECAP**

##### **FEELING SWEEPY**

The 88s rose above a sour moment and took care of business to complete multiple sweeps.

On one side of the ball it was their weakest offensive showing of the season with only 6 total runs.

The few bright spots at the plate were Jordan's 3/3 + 2 runs, Lucas' 2/2 + run + RBI and the biggest hit of them all; Kelley-Ann's 2 out, 2 run single in the bottom of the first, which turned out to be all the runs they would need.

They were able to get away with hitting under .500 as a team because on the other side of the ball their signature defense had one of its most dominating performances in franchise history.

Behind Kris' 88s debut on the mound, a perfect 9 up 9 down first 3 innings knocked the opponent on their back.

The ladies hit them while they were down (Joce snagging a rocket at 3B, Nikki with a running / reaching grab in the outfield), while the guys kept a foot on the opponents chest with a finely executed relay between Brian, Jordan and John to nab what would have been the opponents first run at the plate.

The final death blow once again came at the hands of Kelley-Ann and her unassisted double play by first catching a fly at 2B then catching a runner off first base to squash a bases loaded jam and any remaining hope their opponent had left.

The 88s spent some time together post game trying to wash the sour taste from their mouths with a drink and a side of realization that they swept both the month of July (6-0 / +50) and their regular season series against Spiderpigs (3-0 / +17) thanks to an efficient 6-1 victory.

##### **KRIS' PITCHING STATS:**

0 walks  
7(ish) hits  
1 run



Several put outs on come backers to the mound which he did had 0 issues with

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## WEEK #10 RECAP

### LUCKY 7

Despite playing with only 9 total players for each game, the 88s swept their double header and are now winners of 7 straight thanks to 2 relatively competitive victories (11-3 and 17-12) fueled by:

- Cindy Brooks making her 88s debut (2/4 + run + RBI) to avoid forfeit in game 1
  - Jordan cementing his status as the 88s super sub of 2024 by filling in to also help avoid the forfeits
  - Josh going 3/3 + 3 RBI in game 1
  - Joce going 5/5 + 3 runs + 4 RBI in game 2 (now the 88s season leader in RBI)
  - Brian going 5/5 + 3 runs + 2 RBI in game 2
  - Marnie going 5/5 + 3 runs + 2 RBI in game 2 (while crossing 200 career hits!)
  - 2 max innings (4<sup>th</sup> in game 1, 1<sup>st</sup> in game 2)
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## WEEK #9 RECAP

### THEY'RE BAAAACK

After varied lengths of hiatuses for differing reasons, several players made their return just in time for the matchup against a well-built Spiderpigs club.

Jes (knee injury, likely caused by twerking at the bar) resumed her starting pitcher role after a 7 game absence, picking up right where she left off with a walk less effort and several key plays on the mound while putting up 2 hits, a run and an RBI at the plate.

Kris (La ville de Montreal) may have had his best game as an 88 so far, despite a lagging quad muscle and a 4 game break, by going 3/3 + 2 runs and 3 RBI while playing all defensive positions.

Lucas (work) had the hit of the night by blasting a double off the gray monster at Harold Black to highlight his 3 run + 2 RBI production while absolutely locking down the right side of the outfield.

John (work) showed he didn't miss a beat defensively after missing 3 games with his impressive range and skills. I repeat, he did not miss a beat, defensively.

Josh (vacation) made it clear his reaction time (snagging a rocket at 3B) and swing (3 hits, 2 runs) weren't left at the bottom of the lake with all his lures.

### HIGHS AND LOWS

In typical 88s fashion they got off to a slow start offensively thanks to a scoreless first and missed opportunities in the 2nd with bases loaded and 1 out.

Yet also in typical 88s fashion, their bats kicked into gear with tidal waves in the 4th and 7th (both 7 run max innings) which gave them enough scoring to come away with a 17-11 victory, their 5th in a row.

## **BURYING THE LEAD**

The common belief that pressure creates diamonds may be disputed, but there's no arguing the fact that pressure can create stars on the diamond.

Sitting just 4 shy of 400 career hits and all eyes on her, Nikki embraced the challenge and went 4/4 (including a double, 2 runs and an RBI) which added to her case for legendary status.

She's the first lady and just the 4th player overall to reach this mark.

## **EXTRA BITS**

Even the blinding sun couldn't stop Joce from hauling in about 6 outs from CF.

Two highly touted prospects from the farm system took the field post game for a BP session to offer a glimpse of what the 88s have coming to them in five or so years.

Jes and Jordan became officially official by receiving their freshly minted jerseys.

88s scored the max seven runs in the 4th inning without recording an out (7 straight hits including Lucas' double, Joce's triple and Myles' inside the parker).

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## **WEEK #8 RECAP**

### **HALVSIES**

While down about half their regular roster, the 88s had a chance to wrap up the first half of the regular season by extending their lead in the standings.

**Game 1** started like two heavy weights dancing around the ring feeling each other out with a scoreless inning and a half before the 88s threw the first haymaker with a 7 run bottom of 2.

The Thunder swung back by cutting the lead in half with a 4 run top of 5, but the 88s landed the knock out punch with another 7 run max in the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> to put the game away.

**Game 2** saw the 88s get off to a sluggish start before cranking it up a notch to score in every inning on their way to a season best tying 21 runs.

Jeff pitched back to back complete game victories to remain undefeated on the mound this season. He also helped his cause big time in game 2 with a 5 hit, 5 run, 5 RBI performance at the dish.

Their incredible depth came into play once again thanks to Jordan continuing his red hot start as an 88 offensively (collecting another 6 hits, 5 runs and 6 RBI) and showing his slick defensive moves at short stop. Newcomer Tim Graham made his 88s debut a memorable one by playing strong 3B on defense and putting up 5 hits, 5 runs and 3 RBI of his own.

Both looked as good as they played in their matching #7 CALVERT jerseys (soon to be replaced with customized jerseys of their own).

It wasn't just the rookies making headlines.

Joce once again showed why she's a perennial MVP candidate with a re-donk-ulous 8/10 + 3 run + 5 RBI night while playing flawless defense in the outfield. Shout out to the brave Beluga who stayed strong so Joce could stay and play both games.

Nikki ripped a stand up double as part of her 5 hit + 4 run + 3 RBI night. The only thing she struggled with at times was her throws back to the pitcher – but partial blame goes to getting used to her new cage and the less than enthusiastic effort from the pitcher to reach for them haha.

Marnie, who has always been strong defensively, continued playing 1B on a whole other level this season while smacking 6 hits + 4 runs and an RBI. Winning is clearly in her genes since Hudson came to watch game 2 after scoring 2 goals in his 6-3 victory on the nearby pitch.

The weather co-operated, the vibes were good and the win streak was extended to 4 straight.

## **EXTRA BITS**

The 88s looked right at home playing their first Wednesday night of the season.

88s put up 3 max innings of 7 runs.

Thank you to the Chandlers for helping as scorekeeper (Lisa and Julia), bat boy and ball fetcher (Bryce) and for being the cutest fans in the league (all of the above).

Shout out to the Thunder for graciously offering us a catcher for game 1. Very cool move!

Marnie once again showed she's the greatest recruiter in the history of the 88s by bringing in Uncle Tim, aka Jim aka CALVERT the third aka C3 aka Graham Cracker (still work shopping the nickname).

Playing her first game with her new nickname, Xena (aka Kelley-Ann, aka Warrior Princess) played excellent 2B all night and put up a 3/5 + 2 run + RBI line in game 2 (AH-LA-LA-LA-LA-LAAAA)

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## **WEEK #7 RECAP**

## EXTENDED FAMILY

On a night when we were missing half the roster, it still felt like family thanks to a few familiar faces stepping up to save us from a forfeit.

Sandi, already an 88s legend, added to her historic resume by filling in with flawless pitching, 3 hits and an RBI.

Tanya, making her season debut with the 88s, put up a season best 5 hits (matched only by her brother Brian back on May 27) along with 3 runs and 2 RBI while playing versatile defense.

Jordan, who is quickly turning himself into an indispensable core member of the 88s, filled in admirably at short stop but saw his hit streak come to an end at 12 with a field's choice in the 3rd, dropping his batting average to a pathetic .929.

While each one of the nine 88s share credit for avoiding the forfeit a special gold star goes to Kelly Ann for playing through the pain of feeling under the weather. #WarriorPrincess

On offense it was a balanced attack with every player collecting at least 2 hits and recording at least 1 RBI, helping the 88s extend their streak of at least 1 run scored in an inning to 19 straight.

The defensive highlight of the night goes to Joce's running catch in RF while battling the sun which helped contribute to the 88s giving up the fewest runs in any game so far this season.

## EXTRA BITS

Jocua both worked on their opposite field hitting with much success.

Josh and Jeff. Both names start with J, both names 4 letters long, both went 4/4, both had 3 runs and 3 RBI. Both sexy.

Jeff came up clutch before the game by helping find the 2B hole for Myles to dig and stuff.

Jordan, aka Myles' Brother, sported #7 while his official jersey is being forged by a dying star in Nidavellir.

The tag team of Scarlet and Lisa kept flawless score keeping. Thank you!

Special thanks to Joce as well for assisting with transportation and score keeper training!

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## WEEK #6 RECAP

### PALATE CLEANSER

After suffering their first loss of the season in their previous game, a heart breaker that slipped through their legs in the final inning, the 88s were looking to wash the bad taste out of their mouths.

With the summer solstice looming and temperatures soaring the only thing hotter than the air tonight were the 88 bats.

All 4 ladies had at least 3 hits, including Kelly Ann starting the game 3/3 and Joce collecting 2 hits in the second inning.

Four of the guys went 4/4, including John continuing his torrid pace since coming off the DL (HR, 4 runs and 5 RBI) and Jordan who managed to maintain his perfect batting average on the season.

All told, the offensive display led to the teams highest run total of the season (21).

On the defense side of the ball it was Jeff leading the way with his first start on the mound.

He didn't walk a batter, made several put outs at first base on swinging bunts, threw a 3 up 3 down first inning and kept the opponent to just 4 batters in 3 other innings.

The Saved By The Balls bats came to life with 7 runs in the 4th after the 88s shuffled their defense, but the 88s offense was just too much to catch up with as they cruised through their first game in Fenwick with a 21-10 final.

#### **EXTRA BITS:**

88s scored in every inning

Every 88 scored at least once

Marnie joins the K club which now includes the majority of 88s

Myles played the first inning at catcher for Saved by the Balls and became the first 88 to reach the 400 career RBI level

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## **WEEK #5 RECAP**

### **STREAKS**

Despite an overcast sky, it was all sunshine and rainbows for the 88s early as they cruised to a 16-4 W in their first game of the night to extend their winning streak to a lucky 7.

Game 1 was all about Jocua.

Joce's 3 run bomb to the fence was the highlight of the night.

It was her first home run as an 88 (the first ever by a lady) and it gave them enough runs to complete the mercy victory in the 5th. Oh and she also went 4/4 with 3 runs and 3 RBI and then she ate the bowl.

While Joce was the offensive star, other fan favorites on the cast stepped up as well like Marnie's 4/4 with a pair of stand up doubles, John's 3/3 + 2 runs + 3 RBI in his return from the 15 day DL and Nikki's 3/3 with a run and questionable taste in music.

On the other side of the ball it was Josh leading the way.

He made headlines defensively with his steady glove and arm at 3B which accounted for over 3 innings worth of outs during the game, supported well by efforts from Kelly Ann, Marnie and Nikki who flawlessly finished many of those put outs at 2B, 1B and C respectively.

Then came the second half of the double header...

If you just read the cliff notes from the game (88s scored in every inning, Kelly Ann caught a hard line drive, Myles tied the game with an inside the park home run and chased down a ball deep in CF, John again went 3/3, Brian blasted one to the fence and scored twice, Joce got another extra base hit in the 6th, Kris went 3/3 with 2 RBI and Sandi didn't walk a single batter) you'd probably assume the 88s kept their roll going with an 8th straight win but you'd be sadly mistaken.

All good things come to an end, and their winning streak was snapped at 7 by the hands of a very worthy opponent.

After narrowly escaping with a 1 run victory in their first matchup, the ball bounced the other way this time. It finished with another 1 run difference (9-10), only this time it was the Oddballs coming up big when it mattered most, giving the 88s their first loss of the season.

As one streak came to an end a new one took its place as Myles left a streak of shit in CF when he failed to make a key sliding catch from his backside in the last inning as part of his series of miscues which blew the lead, the game and the winning streak.

Lucas sparked hope by leading off the bottom of the final inning with a line drive to the fence resulting in a stand up triple but those behind him went down in order and the 88s finished 1 run shy of tying the game.

88s and Oddballs finish their regular season matchup deadlocked at 1-1 with an equal +/- (24-24).

#### **EXTRA BITS**

Nikki finished 6/7 on the night to raise her batting average to an impressive 0.563, over 100 points higher than her career average.

With a first inning foul out Brian joins the 2024 K club which now consists of half the roster. Today it was Brian, but we all shall fall.

Linda filled in wonderfully as scorekeeper by not missing a thing and she was softer to kiss.

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## WEEK #4 RECAP

### BACK N' FOURTH

The 88s looked to keep the good times rollin' with a lean and mean 10 person lineup and a familiar face on the bump.

It wasn't going to be easy. They'd have to fight for their right to party.

Not only were they down 3 members of the J-squad, they were up against a well-rounded Spiderpigs team who were riding high on a 4 game winning streak of their own.

Thanks to every lady getting a hit during the 5 run first inning and top notch infield defense, the 88s built themselves a 9-3 lead after 3 innings that never felt safe.

In the 4<sup>th</sup>, the Spiderpigs strong bats wore out the 3rd base line and squealed back to tie it at 9 all with a big 6 runs, followed quickly by another 3 runs in the 5th to put the 88s on their heels.

Down 3 and needing a spark, Myles led off the bottom of the 5th by hustling a vintage bloop inside the park home run to help kick start a 5 run inning, giving the 88s a narrow 14-12 lead late in the game.

Then came what turned out to be the TSN turning point in the top of the 6th.

The Spiderpigs had already scored 2 runs to tie it at 14 and were threatening to do a lot more with 2 more runners on base and still no outs.

Which is when Kris huffed and puffed and scooped up a grounder for an unassisted tag and touch double play to blow the rally down.

Heading into the 7th and final inning knotted up at 14, all that was needed now was for the 88s to bust out a classic offensive explosion.

Myles and Lucas got things started with matching triples to score what turned out to be the winning run, but they weren't down there. The Jocua connection, Brian and Kris all crushed impressive extra base hits to pile up 6 total runs and put them up for good.

With sweat dripping down their faces (some from the humidity, some from the tension), the 88s wrapped up their 6th straight win to start the season before heading home to hit the cold showers.

### EXTRA (BACON) BITS:

Sandi's excellent season debut by giving up 0 walks on the mound and collecting 3 hits, 2 runs and 3 RBIs at the plate.

The speedsters combined to go 7/7 + 6 runs + 4 RBI.

Marnie with stellar defense all night at 1B, especially early to keep us in it.

Faced multiple deficits and multiple ties but kept working and fighting.

Highest scoring output on the season so far (20 runs).

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## **WEEK #3 RECAP**

### **GUYS AND DOLLS**

Going into a battle for first place without their reigning MVP, their franchise leader in hits and their young speedster, the 88s had to call in the cavalry to help hold off a hard charging Thunder battalion.

A leadoff home run in the first that sent a frosty chill down the spine of the 88s was thawed 1 inning later when Jordan used his first career at bat for the 88s to launch a 2 run shot of his own to capture his new squad a 2-1 lead as part of a big 5 run 2nd inning.

Thanks to performances like Joce's 4/4 + 2 runs + RBI, Brian's 5/5 + run + 6 RBI and Marnie's 3/3 + 2 runs + RBI, the 88s were able to build an early 8-4 lead after 4 innings.

However the Thunder would storm back and tie things up in the 5th with a 3 run shot and the two remaining undefeated teams found themselves knotted up at 9 runs apiece.

With the wind blowing hard across the battlefield the 88s hunkered down and regrouped with a well-timed offensive explosion of 8 runs in the open 7th inning, highlighted by Brian's 3 run slam (his first on the year) and a solo ding dong by Kris (his first as an 88).

All told, the guys combined for 16 of the teams 19 RBIs, 3 home runs over the fence (an 88s franchise record) and were only responsible for 4 total outs in the game to help the 88s capture the flag of first place with a 19-12 victory.

Perhaps bruised from the battle, the 88s had a sputtering start to game 2 which saw them trailing 2-0 heading into their half of the 2nd, which is when the dolls took control.

They began their dominance by sending 4 ladies across the plate in the bottom of the second and combined for 11 of the teams 14 RBIs in the game, led by an impressive 3/3 + 3 runs + 3 RBI stat line from rookie sensation Jes and a frumpy 3/3 + run + 3 RBI performance from Nikki.

Kylie corralled a fly ball during her inning in center field, the Chapados connected on a put out at 2B and the 88s got the night's game schedule back on track with an early 14-2 mercy finish.

### **EXTRA BITS:**

Marnie crosses the 100 career run plateau!



Myles laid out for his annual flash of brilliance which likely won't be seen again until 2025.

Impressive debut! Jordan finished 60 feet short of a cycle in his first game as an 88 and 6/6 with 6 runs, a HR and 4 extra base hits on the night overall.

The 88s scored in every inning except for 1 (the first inning of game 2).

Perfect 5-0 month of May.

Happy Birthday James!

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## **WEEK #2 RECAP**

### **HANG IN THERE BABY**

The 88s faced their toughest test of the young season against a very talented group of Oddballs.

Coming off their mercy victory, the Oddballs showed they were loose and ready to roll by jumping out to a 6-4 lead after 3 innings, giving the 88s their first deficit of the year.

Having only 4 more innings left to work with, the 88s needed to turn things around quickly so this was the perfect time for one of their patented offensive explosions.

Thanks to 7 straight hits kick started by Lucas, Marnie and Jeff leading off the inning, the 88s rallied for the max 7 runs in the top of the 4th to take an 11-6 lead.

With reigning MVP John having a rare off night at short, they needed others to step up and provide the clamps defensively.

Brian and Kelley-Ann connected on the play of the night by nabbing a speedy runner off the base at 2B for the first out of the 3rd, which in hindsight proved to be the TSN turning point, giving the 88s the momentum that fueled their big 4th.

Other defensive stand outs included Lucas' covering catch in center, Kris' slick scoop at short stop, Josh's strong play at 3B and a great relay to Nikki at home to catch a runner trying to score at the plate.

Every time the 88s felt like they might pull away, the Oddballs resilience kept them in the game until the very end.

After a close play at third didn't go the 88s way in the bottom of the 7th, they found themselves +1 and facing a bases loaded, 2 out situation with the winning run standing on second base.

Yet perhaps fittingly, the ball once again found Josh at 3B who picked it up and stamped both the base and the 88s' 3rd straight win to start the 2024 campaign.

While perhaps not running on all cylinders, the 88s were able to dig deep enough and do just enough to escape by the skin of their teeth against a great team.

#### **EXTRA BITS:**

Third star: Jes with walkless pitching, 2 hits, a run and 3 RBI while being the primary substitute runner.

Second star: Joce and her perfect 4/4 outing with 2 runs, 3 RBI and several strong plays in the outfield.

First star: Josh playing on a wonky wheel and not having taken a swing since last September, making his season debut a memorable one by going 3/3 (all impressive doubles).

Who had Myles and Kris as being the only players to not score a run in the game on their 88 bingo card?

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### **WEEK #1 RECAP**

#### **NEW LEAGUE, OLD HABITS**

The revamped 88s had a successful debut in the Pelham Softball League.

Was it really only May 6<sup>th</sup>? At times it felt like the 88s may have skipped the off season by picking up where they left off with their usual solid all around defense.

John and Marnie seemed like they were already in midseason form with strong plays in the infield including a touch and throw double play from John and Marnie's game 2 clinching scoop out of the dirt.

Myles kick started his season by sending the first pitch he saw over the right field fence for his first out of the park home run since July 22, 2021. He also hit a jackpot on the slot machine by rolling out a 7/7/7 (ABs, hits, runs), while scoring with every plate appearance. It's expected he'll be announcing his retirement soon after being overheard saying he wanted to go out on a high note.

Not to be outshined, the newest hot shot off season signings lived up to the hype and fanfare surrounding their highly anticipated debuts.

Kelley-Ann played solid D at 2B while collecting 4 hits and an RBI at the plate.

Kris sent an opposite field triple to the fence and crossed the plate 4 times.

Jes kept opposing hitters off balance all night with a walk-less 14 innings and an early season defensive gem by making a diving snag on a hard come backer.

Around the time game 2 was feeling in hand, a cotton candy sunset revealed itself like a sweet kiss hello to welcome summer and the promise of a new season on the diamond.

#### **EXTRA BITS**

- Jeff knocked in the first inside the park home run of the season, matching his 2023 season total
- Jeff's better half Nikki collected the first RBI for the 88s in the new season
- John crosses the 200 career RBI plateau!
- After opening night, the K club is already three members strong