



# OLD TIMER'S THOUGHTS:

## 2013 SWBL Pre-Season Rankings

By: Andy Oldenburg

*It was tough to move away from St. Louis after getting the call to the "Biggest Little City" in late February, but it has been a great experience so far working in Triple-A Baseball. CLEARLY one of the biggest things I'll miss about STL was the fact that I won't be able to compete in this year's Skibbe Wiffleball League season. Last year's change to a weekend only event was simply awesome (despite going 0-10, and being named the worst wiffleball team in the United States), and I wish I could be there to compete and have fun with everyone again. Commissioner Sam Skibbe of course kept me in-tune with all the latest news and updates concerning the league, and it looks like it will be another competitive season in the Skibbe backyard. Even though I'm in Reno, NV., and per request of Brewers captain Peter Leicht, I thought I'd put in my two cents on the 2013 SWBL season.*



### 1. Cardinals

Probably guilty of being a homer here, but I have to slot the veteran-heavy Cardinals as the #1 team entering this season. The big four headlining their roster (Sam Skibbe, Brett Spencer, Jeff Bertram and Craig Boyd) is absolutely incredible, and the potential to break single-season hitting records is there for the taking. The only thing that could stop the Cards from a championship run is heavy drinking during the morning, day, and evening which could lead to a lack of focus.



### 2. Brewers

The National League appears stacked this season, as the Brewers bring back their entire squad from last season. The Brew Crew arrive to the Skibbe backyard each and every game stocked with ice-cold man sodas, and the desire to win. Team captain Peter Leicht is arguably the most underrated player in league history, and is surrounded by exceptionally good wiffle players. Kyle Cornell has emerged as a top pitcher in the SWBL, while Carter and Gatti won't hurt you anywhere on the field.



### 3. Rays

The Rays debut as the first American League team in my 2013 rankings, and rightfully so as they are the defending champions within the league. Captain Paul Castellano had a breakout campaign in 2012, which included insane power numbers. While I don't think he'll repeat those lofty numbers, he's still one of the best hitters in the league. Chris Meador is hands down the best defender in the league, and can make a difference each game. It's hard to think that a defending champ might be overlooked, but it appears that way. Look for another playoff push by the Rays.



### 4. Rockies

Headlined by arguably the league's biggest feared hitter, Blake Spencer, the Rockies look to make the next step in the SWBL. Equipped with the most violent wiffle ball swing in history, Blake and his teammates present a challenge to the opposition every game. Grant Boyd and Brian Kenney return once again to form one of the most complete teams in the league. Boyd emerged as an up-and-coming pitcher last season, while also hitting bombs from the left side of the plate. The Rockies give the National League even more firepower, and are capable of yet another strong year.



## 5. Yankees

Last year, I had the Yankees high up on my preseason list, and they unfortunately made me look like an idiot. On paper, I think they have even more potential this season. Scott Pohle, Sam Bakula, and John Calloway lead the Yankees charge, and they are a big darkhorse team this season. These guys are as passionate about wiffleball as they come, which can go a long way in this league. Scott and John could form a formidable duo in the lineup, and put up monster numbers. At the end of the day, we'll see if their big offseason translates to a successful season on the diamond.



## 6. Royals

With two of the top players in the league on the roster, it's hard to put the Royals this low in the rankings. However, I think it just goes to show how deep this league has become, and how competitive it can be. Gus Skibbe is still the top pitcher in the league (in my opinion), and he can shutdown opposing hitters every time he takes the bump. Edloe probably grew another 6 inches heading into this season, and is capable of mashing home runs with the best of them. It wouldn't shock me to see this #6 team make the playoffs, and do some damage.



## 7. Giants

The last two teams on my rankings (Giants and Athletics) are the only two teams where I feel there is essentially no chance to make the playoffs. Can they win a couple games, and play the role of spoiler? Sure. Will they have enough firepower to make a long-term run this season? Probably not. The Giants, led by veteran Rob Walters, should at the very least be the most entertaining team this year. Newcomers Dave Menne and Cam Branson round out the expansion team, and I'm not positive on what they bring the table. If all else fails, sit back and enjoy the antics they will provide.



## 8. Athletics

Coming in last are the Athletics, largely do-in-part since I only know one of their players (Alex Heck). Alex is a quality player, but I'm not sure what talent will be around him. Raymond McGrew should provide some needed speed to the roster, but after that, who really knows. Look for the A's similar to the Giants, ruin some playoff hopes of other teams in the league late in the season.

### SEASON PREDICTIONS

**MVP:** Brett Spencer  
*Sleeper Pick:* Peter Leicht

**CY YOUNG:** Sam Skibbe  
*Sleeper Pick:* Grant Boyd

**GOLD GLOVE:** Chris Meador  
*Sleeper Pick:* Craig Boyd

**COMEBACK PLAYER:** Jeff Bertram  
*Sleeper Pick:* John Calloway

**NEWCOMER:** Dave Menne  
*Sleeper Pick:* Raymond McGrew

**MOST TIME SPENT PASSED OUT AT POOL:** Dave Menne  
*Sleeper Pick:* Rob Walters

**MOST HANGOVERS:** Brett Spencer  
*Sleeper Pick:* Blake Spencer

**MOST LIKELY TO CRY AFTER LOSING:** Sam Skibbe  
*Sleeper Pick:* Paul Castellano

**MOST BEERS DRANK:** Peter Leicht  
*Sleeper Pick:* Brett Spencer

**MOST TIME LOOKING AT GIRLS IN BIKINS:** Rob Walters  
*Sleeper Pick:* Scott Pohle