

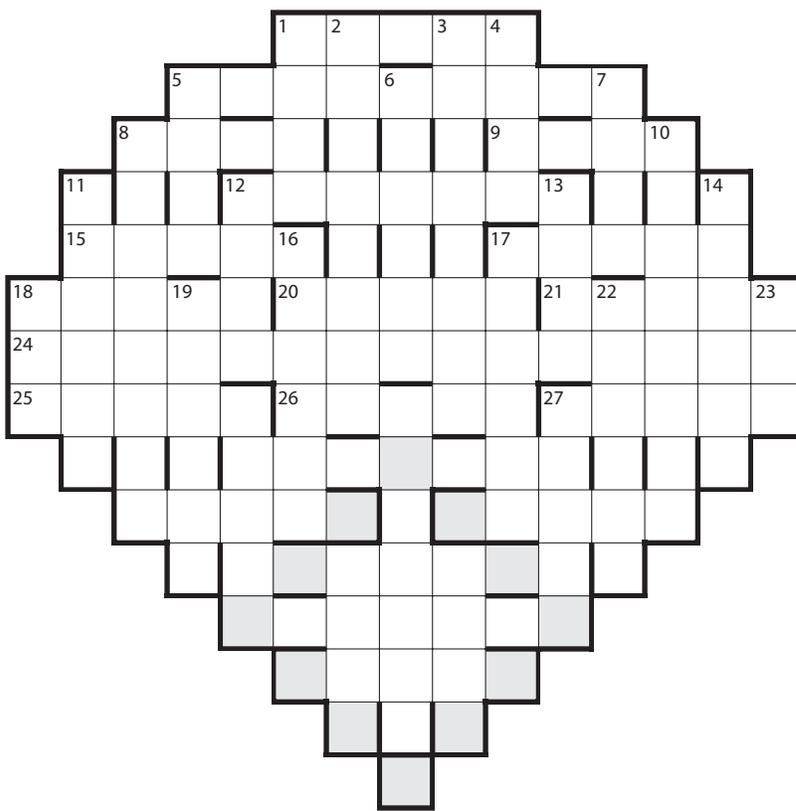
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

Home Game

This puzzle is for home fans... that is, those whose home is 24 Across. Our four-word cheer circles the shaded base paths counterclockwise, starting in the first square past home and finishing, aptly, at home. Entries crossing the diamond's base paths are clued as a group, but in random order and with lengths withheld. Eight answers are capitalized.

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. An introduction to clue-solving may be found online at www.theatlantic.com/issues/puzzclue.htm.



ACROSS

1. Beer covering leader of the manly men (5)
5. Series parting shot bothers cows (9)
8. Pitcher and a shortstop throw the ball (4)
9. Run connected with outfield error (4)
12. Seeker of gold needing one bag for the cycle? (7)
15. Edit taped words of French adopted by Yank adversary (5)
17. Place to gamble on backing up chopper in the dirt (5)
18. Western team halfway into row (5)
20. Lit up a Tiger's third base (5)
21. Player heading to Tampa: a Ray (5)
25. Reversing strikeout is a large visual aid? (5)
26. 14 pounds second pitch (5)
27. Snappy bunt initially lay on the line (5)

DOWN

1. Help a rival of McGwire (4)
2. Victory in close sort of double-header (8)
3. Playing DH, join me in bottle of wine (8)
4. Guru leaves that season (4)
5. B+ group of players (4)
6. Blow horn about conclusion of season (6)
7. Behind concession, hit someone in the 10th? (4)
8. Ahead of time, tries out St. Peter's screwball (8)
10. Facing north can matter with fly-catcher outside (8)
11. General manager getting cheer with a sort of cracker (6)
12. Turned at the plate, about 100% (4)
13. Hit Oakland player's hero in the East (4)
14. Base thief's charm (6)
16. Brings home teammate at first, going into depression (4,2)
17. Academic must ultimately like a neglected field (6)
18. Bird's reaction to being hit by liner on the head (3)
19. Heather and kin interest catcher in pitcher's stats (6)

22. Out-and-out sprinted into Met field? (6)
23. Request catcher's gear after the first (3)

DIAMOND

- a. Begin pitching life
- b. Note New York Giant's opposite
- c. 1930s player who pounded third of doubles in new park
- d. Walking a man in the leadoff position with flashy stuff
- e. Old wheels churned one path
- f. Catching foul tip, be carried by strong outward force
- g. Loss taken by visitors, initially, in a European capital
- h. Classic play to set back good day
- i. A big, interminable finale of Pete Rose admirer on Broadway
- j. For audit, cut a locker-room amenity
- k. Catching up with Cobb at home before game