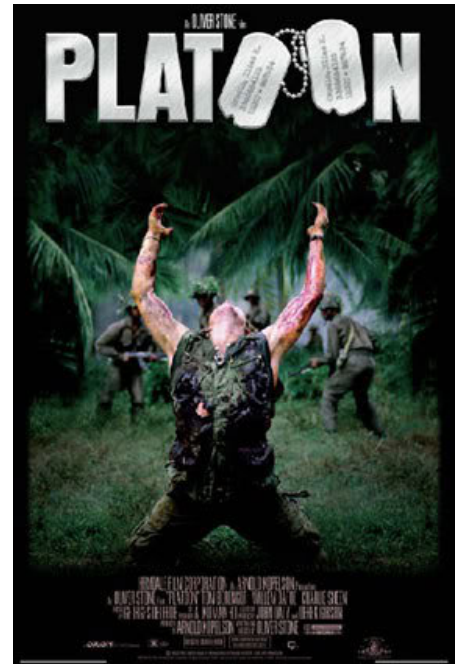


Tuesday's agree-to-terms with outfielder David Dellucci ostensibly adds yet another platoon player to the mix for the Indians. Left-handed hitting Dellucci will likely start against righties and play left field, while right-handed hitting Jason Michaels will start against lefties. And that's just the beginning. The Indians are apparently gunning for the Guinness Book of World Records for the most platoons on a single baseball team. Papa Cass vents.



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It's also a baseball team.

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Despite what Mark Shapiro and Eric Wedge have said or will say, there are only two Indians players locked into their positions for 162 games, barring injury, as the 2007 roster stands right now.

Grady Sizemore is the undisputed center fielder. Travis Hafner is the undisputed designated hitter. That's it. Every other player on the roster has offensive or defensive questions, and could end up in a platoon situation.

Think that's going overboard? Let's take a look.

Left field and right field are a logistical mess. In addition to the Dellucci/Michaels platoon, you still have to find playing time for Casey Blake and Shin-Soo Choo, both of whom will make the opening day roster. Franklin Gutierrez is likely the odd man out.

Blake can play first base if Garko fails to follow up his solid rookie effort. Blake can also start at third if Andy Marte continues to struggle with the bat.

Second baseman Josh Barfield, like Marte, is penciled in as the opening day starter, but his small body of work, combined with the fact that he's changing leagues, doesn't scream "put him there and forget about him."

Jhonny Peralta had a maddening year last year. The fact that he is rubber-stamped as the starting shortstop to begin 2007 is far more a product of the Indians crossing their fingers and hoping 2006 was an aberration than anything concrete.

Translation: keep Hector Luna and Joe Inglett by the Batphone. They might be pressed into service if Barfield or Peralta end up playing themselves onto the Buffalo Shuttle.

Then there is the curious case of Victor Martinez. He hits like a first baseman, throws like a first baseman and catches like a first baseman, but the Indians already have too many first basemen, and might sign another before the offseason ends. So he catches. But he's still going to play some first base to save his knees.

So let's get the rundown of all the slashes that might exist for the Indians next year:

Victor Martinez, C/1B

Ryan Garko, 1B/DH

Hector Luna, IF/OF

Joe Inglett, IF/OF

Shin-Soo Choo, LF/RF/CF

Jason Michaels, LF/RF

David Dellucci, LF/RF

Andy Marte, Cleveland/Buffalo

Josh Barfield, Cleveland/Buffalo

Jhonny Peralta, Cleveland/Buffalo/bench

Casey Blake, RF/LF/DH/1B/3B/hitting coach/concessions manager/mayor of Linndale

Versatility is a great attribute in sports. But I'm just concerned that in the Indians' case, "versatile" is just a euphemism for "not good enough to play everyday."

Nah. When have the Indians ever been guilty of double-speak?