



I had no intention of writing about this year's Baseball Hall of Fame voting. None. Zip, zilch, zero. Felt it was already extensively covered elsewhere, and the comments on other articles I've seen approach the insanity that has only been replicated at the bottom of CNN/FoxNews articles about the recent presidential election. Figured I'd find a much better way to spend my time. But then the unthinkable happened; not only did the Baseball Writers Association of America not elect a single candidate to the Hall this year, they also allowed Kenny Lofton to fall completely off the ballot. So with an equal combination of frustration, anger and reluctance, I approached the keyboard late this week to at least get my thoughts down on "paper," submitted for the world to see. If you're completely over the Hall debate and have absolutely no interest in discussing or reading about this anymore, I totally understand. Good news is you're still getting a Lazy one this week, and I'm saving the Hall stuff for the very end so you can pull the ripcord before that point if you'd like. We're still going to have a nice Sunday chat about Trevor Bauer, Spring Training, and even a little Jeanmar Gomez thrown in for good measure. So whether you're in for the whole show this week or not, here's a meandering effort for you to digest with your morning coffee, fresh waffles and crispy bacon on this unseasonably warm Lazy Sunday...

Newly-acquired starting pitcher Trevor Bauer has already had himself a busy 2013. First, he had his new club's big-league skipper and GM visit him in Texas to have a chat and observe his unique training regime. As if that weren't stressful enough, the a player who is shy and quiet by his own admission flew to Cleveland to take part in the Indians winter development program, and as a result was put through his paces by the assembled host of media in his first interviews for his new baseball city. As I've indicated previously both in this space and on Twitter, I'm all-in on Trevor Bauer and am really looking forward to watching him pitch in an Indians uniform. But part of the reason the Indians were able to acquire the talented youngster was his perceived "weirdness" in the Arizona clubhouse. It got to the point where Bauer actually contacted his D-Backs teammates in the offseason to ask them what he did to rub them the wrong way. So this initial interaction with the cantankerous Cleveland media had the potential to be ugly, or at the very least awkward. Judging by the articles that have been coming out, the complete opposite occurred. Both [Anthony Castrovice](#) and [Jordan Bastian](#) put out their usual excellent

pieces on Bauer, and both had interesting and good things to say about the 21-year old righty. I wrote about my thoughts on Bauer's issues with the Diamondbacks

[in a previous Lazy Sunday](#)

, so I'm not going to extensively rehash them here. But if you'd like to see some of the...interesting pregame activity that Bauer has become known for, there's a video embedded into both Castro and Bastain's articles that are linked above.



Bauer is a bright kid, the son of an engineer who is interested in not only the results but in the raw mechanics of pitching. He's come right out to say that he's been somewhat shy all his life, and teammates throughout the years have sometimes mistaken that shyness for arrogance. He's clearly bothered by that impression, and it seems like he's really taken steps to identify and mitigate those issues. The bottom line is that if Bauer comes out and pitches effectively, then his personality quirks, unique pre-game and pre-inning warm-up routine will become "colorful" and "fun." If he struggles, then people will question whether he "needs" to throw long-toss, or crow-hop to fire in his first warm-up toss between innings. I'll rely on the classic baseball film Bull Durham here, as Crash Davis made his point to Nuke LaLoosh about success allowing for a little extra freedom to be different:

"Your shower shoes have fungus on them. You'll never make it to the bigs with fungus on your shower shoes. Think classy, you'll be classy. If you win 20 in the show, you can let the fungus grow back and the press will think you're colorful. Until you win 20 in the show, however, it means you're a slob"

This also serves to highlight the Indians much-heralded [Winter Development Program](#), the brainchild of Indians team president Mark Shapiro 18 years ago. The program serves to

acclimate some of the top prospects in the organization to the city of Cleveland, Progressive Field, major league training staffs and facilities and of course, dealing with the media. The players that have gone through the program in the past have always given it rave reviews, and it really makes a difference in preparing the prospects to move up the organizational ladder. This year, the players will have an opportunity to interact with GM Chris Antonetti and Terry Francona, and featured speakers will include ESPN's Buster Olney and...wait for it...Ohio State football coach Urban Meyer. Meyer was actually a pretty good baseball player in his youth, having been drafted out of his Ashtabula high school in the 13th

round by the Braves back in 1982. Meyer played just two years of professional baseball, never making it out of Rookie ball and posting a career OPS of just .585 in 110 at bats. So Meyer's presentation will hopefully be more motivational than batting practice. Participating in the program this year are 1B Jesus Aguilar, RHP Shawn Armstrong, C/1B Yan Gomes, RHP Preston Guilmet, RHP Trey Haley, LHP T.J. House, OF Tyler Holt, SS Francisco Lindor, RHP Fabio Martinez, OF Carlos Moncrief, SS Ronny Rodriguez, RHP Danny Salazar, LHP Gio Soto, and SS Tony Wolters. All of those players are going to appear in the top half of my upcoming prospect countdown. Some are still quite a ways away from the MLB roster, but all will benefit from the knowledge and experience gained in the program this offseason.

In a relatively minor deal earlier this week, the [Indians dealt pitcher Jeanmar Gomez to the Pittsburgh Pirates in return for outfield prospect Quincy Latimore](#)

. Gomez was designated for assignment to make room for outfielder Nick Swisher, and became expendable after the Brett Myers signing. The soon to be 25-year old Gomez went 5-8 with a 5.96 ERA in 90 2/3 IP for the Indians last year, and has a career WHIP of 1.510 in 206 2/3 big league innings. Gomez is probably most known for throwing a perfect game for AA Akron, and has the upside of a #5 starter in the big leagues. A switch to the NL might help his numbers, but the raw talent just isn't there for Gomez to be anything more than a rotation filler in the Show. He's out of options, so if he doesn't make the Pirates 25-man roster out of spring training then he'll have to be exposed to waivers again in order to be assigned to Pittsburgh's minor league system. So if I were Gomez, I wouldn't exactly start house hunting in the Steel City just yet.





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