

A Tale of Two Tribes: Between 2012 and Now, Talent is the Key

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

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Do you remember where the Cleveland Indians were on May 18th last year?

Do you want to remember?

Trust me, it isn't bad. It's actually quite good. It's what followed makes the memory a touchy subject. The Indians went 46-77 after May 18th. A steady slide down the standings. That record was the worst in the AL Central over the span of May 19th to the end of the year. If they had not caught fire to start the season, they might have made the Astros look good.

The losing streak, the implosion of the rotation, the left field mess, the injuries. There wasn't much good going on with the Tribe after May.

Yet we sat here, with our Indians three games up on the Tigers in the division, thinking, hoping, and believing that perhaps, there would be a run made out of this start. We weren't sure how, but maybe this rag-tag bunch of players that were assembled had some sort of extra factor that helped over come the talent gap other teams had over the Indians.

Yeah about that.

That's the word there, talent. When it comes down to it all, you can do a lot with an "it factor" or intangibles, and leadership. But none of that means anything unless you have talent. No team goes to the playoffs without talent. They can win a World Series with the other stuff, but they

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can't get to that position without players.

We're talking major players.

And that's your separation. That makes this year's Cleveland Indians team much better than last year's team. Take a trip with me as I show the incredibly different Cleveland Indians teams that share the same record.

2012 - Hot Start, First Place

Up through May 18th, the Tribe never got too high or too low. They never lost more than three games in a row, but never won more than four in a row. Nine of their 22 wins came by one run, while six more came by two or three runs. That's only seven wins by more than three runs. Their losses? 10 of 17 came by three runs or less. So a lot of close games, a lot of low scoring games.

They also played in six extra inning games, which is double compared to this year's version of the Tribe.

The Indians, above all though, claimed stake to first place in the American League Central. They were three games up on the Detroit Tigers, who got off to a sluggish 19-20 start. Despite the fact that freshly signed Johnny Damon was their left fielder, Jose Lopez was hitting ninth, and the top of the rotation in Masterson and Jimenez was flailing around 5-5 the Indians were playing good enough ball to lead. Jeanmar Gomez and Derek Lowe got off to a surprising 7-3 start, Chris Perez had blown one save to open up the season, but then reeled off 12 straight, somehow, the offense was producing enough to win led by new leadoff hitter Shin-Soo Choo.

Just where did the Tribe sit at May 18th, at 22-17?

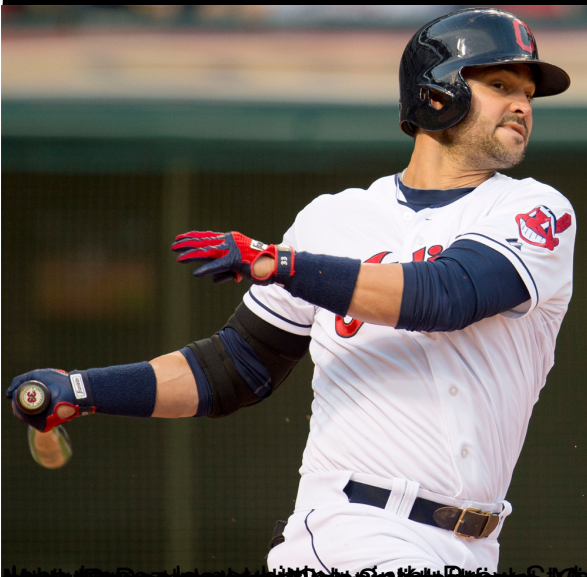
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~~Adrian Beltré's Strikeouts~~



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