



This is the worst part of the baseball season. Four days without games of value. Our only options are to endure 3.5 hours of Chris Berman's tired schtick during televised batting practice or watch a game that "matters" a lot more than it should. Media members dig for bogus narratives and feel-good stories to keep themselves entertained. The players appear to enjoy themselves, though a fair amount of them are probably wishing they were on vacation like their teammates and managers are. For some, being named to the All-Star Game is a great achievement and something every great player should experience at least once. But overall, the Major League Baseball All-Star Game and accompanying Home Run Derby are a joke and serve as nothing more than a respite from the rigors of a 162-game season.

As I [mentioned last season](#) around this time, I used to love the Home Run Derby as a kid. That was when my views on baseball were simple, with the childlike desire to watch my favorite players hit the ball far. Now, I spend more time wondering why grown men and women care so much about batting practice when I see it before every Indians game I attend. Is it because of the names involved? Is it because it's drilled into baseball fans to care about such a trivial event?

I could rattle off all kinds of stats about the Indians, sabermetric and otherwise. I can remember final scores, dates, winning pitchers, and exact plays. As I sit here penning this, I couldn't even begin to tell you who is in the Home Run Derby. I simply don't care. Home runs that travel 380-feet on pitches purposely thrown belt high down the middle of the plate don't feel like accomplishments to me. Hell, even 480-foot home runs in a controlled environment aren't impressive. Hit a 98 mph letter-high fastball 480-feet and I'll be impressed. Dig out a slider on

the outer half and hit it over the opposite field fence and I'll get excited. Dish out souvenirs to grown men fighting over glorified batting practice home runs while your Little League coach or bench coach pitches to you? Meh.

My lack of interest in the Home Run Derby can't even hold a candle to my lack of interest in the All-Star Game itself. For all of Major League Baseball's flaws, including shitty umpiring, the steroid witch hunt, the banning of Pete Rose, the ridiculous construction of the schedule, and the incredible financial imbalance between teams that MLB allows, deciding home field advantage in the World Series with an exhibition game may be the most egregious of these problems.

In a multi-billion dollar industry, a major edge in the league's championship round is determined by the winning league for the All-Star Game. Home teams in the American League are 391-319 so far. Home teams in the National League are 387-317. That's a .550 win percentage in the AL and a .550 win percentage in the NL. If the playoffs began today, the American League would be represented by Boston, Tampa, Detroit, Oakland and Texas. Those five teams are 151-88 at home and 124-114 on the road. The National League would be represented by Atlanta, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Arizona. Those five teams are 147-85 at home and 123-116 on the road. Obviously, home field advantage makes a big difference.

As a fan, a front office member, or a team member of one of the teams playing for the World Series trophy, wouldn't you have the right to be pissed off if you have to play Games 1 and 2 on the road because Jason Castro, the de facto representative of the Houston Astros, struck out against Aroldis Chapman as the winning run? No knock on Jason Castro, who is a pretty decent player, but there's no reason for that to be the case. Or, if Everth Cabrera, the lone San Diego Padres representative, grounded out with the bases loaded against Mariano Rivera to cost your team home field. What if you lose out on home field advantage because Chris Tillman and his 4.95 FIP (!! ) got rocked and the AL couldn't come back?

It's a joke. Indians players Yan Gomes, Mike Aviles, and Vinnie Pestano all left town for a few days during the All-Star Break according to Tweets they posted yesterday. Manager Terry Francona is in Las Vegas taking his mind off of the grind of the season. These are the real winners during the All-Star Break. The guys who get to spend time with their families or simply take a break from the game. I'm sure Jason Kipnis and Justin Masterson, both at their first All-Star Game, are thrilled and honored to be there. I'm happy for them and the organization was clearly happy for them as well. I'd rather they have gotten some time to unwind and relax, but it will be a good experience for them nonetheless.

If I flip to the game, it'll be because they're making an appearance and someone has alerted me to it. Otherwise, I'll purposely find something else to do. In some ways, it's my way of boycotting the sheer stupidity of Bud Selig's decision to add extra emphasis to the All-Star Game. In other ways, it's my brief respite from the game as well. It becomes a grind as a fan, too, watching every game either in person or on TV.

I hope they don't call the All-Star Game the "Midsummer Classic" anymore. Talk about something being disingenuous. There's hardly anything "classic" about the All-Star Game. I don't besmirch those who enjoy the game, the Derby, or the Celebrity Softball Game, but, for me, it's the only time from April through October that I don't care about baseball.

My only hope for this year's All-Star Game is that an umpire seriously blows a call on replay, allowing a small-market player to benefit at the expense of a large-market player, with the small-market player failing a postgame random drug test, resulting in the reevaluation of home field advantage to the winner of the All-Star Game. And a Deadspin story the following day showing Pete Rose cashing a winning betting ticket at a Las Vegas sportsbook. Now, that sounds like a Midsummer Classic.