

Series Preview: Indians at Royals

Written by {ga=pup}

Monday, May 21 2007 7:00 PM -

Fresh off a 6-1 homestand, the Indians are a Major League Baseball BEST 17-4 at home this season. Today, they go back on the road to begin a three game set with the whipping boys of the AL Central ... the Kansas City Royals. The Tribe is just 10-11 on the road this season, and has dropped four of their last five. Cris Sykes previews the series. (Also, those looking for the B-List, it will post later in the day.)



It is time for the Indians to hit the road once again.

The team just completed a 6-1 homestand, raising their home record to a Major League best 17-4. The last time the Indians started this well at home was 1995 when they made their first trip to the World Series in 41 years.

Cleveland is currently 10-11 on the road and has lost four of their last five away from Jacobs Field. This trip is not the one where you would expect them to climb their road record over .500 when it is completed. After opening with a three game series in Kansas City, they will travel to Detroit before finishing with three in Boston.

The Kansas City Royals will welcome the Tribe into Kauffman Stadium with an American League worst record of 17-28. Kansas City has been able to win four of their last five and is six and four in their last ten games. So far in 2007, Kansas City has only managed to come out victorious in seven of twenty-one home games.

Pitching Matchups

Game 1 – Tuesday, May 22, 2007 8:10 PM

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It's Fausto Time! The Indians will send the non-human Fausto Carmona to the mound in game one. Carmona has been absolutely lights out over his last six starts. Fausto has won all five of his decisions since taking a loss on April 13. In the six starts since, Carmona has limited the opposition to eight earned runs on 35 hits in 45 innings pitched.

Fausto will be making his first career start against Kansas City on Tuesday evening. I would expect Eric Wedge to keep a very close eye on Carmona in this game. Wedge allowed Carmona to finish his last start, gaining his first career shutout, but required 121 pitches to do so.

Squaring off against Carmona and the Indians offense will be Odalis Perez. Perez will be making his tenth start of the season and is coming off six innings of one hit, shutout baseball against the Oakland A's. For the season, Perez is two and four with a 5.29 earned run average.

Odalis will be making his fourth career start against the Indians, with one win and two no decisions his results so far. He has held the Indians to seven earned runs over his 19 innings in his career. Two of the starts came in 2006, when Perez allowed four runs in 13 innings.

Game 2 – Wednesday, May 23,2007 8:10 PM

Game two of the series will see the Indians send B-List favorite Cliff Lee

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to middle of the diamond. Lee will be looking for his third win in five starts, against zero defeats. In his 26 innings this year, Lee has allowed twelve earned runs and twenty-five hits.

Lee will be making his 14th career start against the Royals and has a seven and three record. The Royals have scored plenty against Cliff, as he carries a 4.70 earned run average in his career against Kansas City. In typical Cliff Lee fashion though, he gets the victories because he gets some of the best run support in baseball.

Old friend Scott Elarton is scheduled to take on the Tribe in game two. Elarton will be making his third start of the season after missing the last half of 2006 and the first month of 2007 following shoulder surgery.

Elarton has made five starts in his career against the Indians with good results. He has won two of the previous starts and has yet to taste defeat at the hands of the Tribe, though he has a large earned run average of 5.40 in 30 innings.

Game 3, Thursday, May 24, 2007 8:05 PM

I almost feel like copying and pasting the preview from the last Jeremy Sowers start, and look forward to the Tigers series when I do not have to preview a Sowers start. Somehow, on a team that is 27-15, Jeremy Sowers has yet to win a game. Oh,

that is how he does it... a seven plus earned run average! Sowers will once again be pitching as rotation filler, just taking up space in the rotation and my columns until Jake Westbrook can return. Good luck Jeremy. I hear Buffalo is beautiful this time of year.

Drawing the long straw evidently, Jorge De La Rosa will take the mound for Kansas City against Sowers. For the season, De La Rosa will bring four wins and three defeats to the mound with him. Over his 57 innings, De La Rosa has maintained a 3.59 ERA while averaging just over six innings per start.

De La Rosa started three games against the Indians in 2006 and actually got a win without any losses, despite allowing twelve earned runs and thirteen hits in fourteen innings.

Royals Offense

Mark Teahen leads the Royals with his .306 batting average. After Teahen, the Royals have a group of four all bunched together hitting between .273 and .287. The Royals are currently 11th in the American League with 32 home runs, and 12th with 174 runs batted in. Coincidentally, Kansas City is also 12th

in the AL with 183 runs scored.

Watch those gaps Indian outfield the Royals do lead the American League with 16 triples.

Royals Bullpen

The Royals are anticipating getting Octavio Dotel into their bullpen for the start of this series. Dotel has been recovering from, ready Tribe fans; it is the dreaded oblique injury. Manager Buddy Bell has said as soon as Dotel is ready to go he will assume the closer duties. This will help Kansas City immensely because it will allow them to slide current closer, Joakim Soria into the eighth inning and another former Indian David Riske into the seventh inning. The Riske/Soria duo has been good for twelve saves in sixteen chances thus far, but both are more suited for the set-up role.

Up Next: @ Detroit, May 25-27