

## Series Preview: Indians at Royals

Written by {ga=pup}

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The Tribe finishes up their short two team home stand this week as the lowly Kansas City Royals come to town for a three game set. By this point, most Indians fans know not to get too excited about the prospects of facing the Royals though ... they have really given the Tribe fits since former bench coach Buddy Bell went over to manage them. Cris Sykes takes some time out to preview the series and pitching matchups for us today.



The Cleveland Indians will be finishing their short seven game home stand by welcoming the Kansas City Royals to Jacobs Field. You might think this is good news for the Tribe, since we are in first place and Kansas City is in last, but for some strange reason the Indians struggle with the Royals.

Maybe it is Buddy Bell, former Indian player and coach, managing the Royals and having intimate knowledge of the Indians' players?

Or it is having Mike Sweeney and John Buck, who for whatever reason suck chrome of bumper hitches against the rest of Major League Baseball, but kill the Indians.

Or it could be just plain old dumb luck. The right match ups at the right time and voila, you have a bad team that matches up well with a good team.

In a stroke of good fortune, for these three games, I don't think KC matches up all that well with us for a change. The Indians will be out to send a message, with their top three starting pitchers taking the mound in this series.

**Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 7:05 PM**

**C.C. Sabathia (8-1, 3.78 Earned Run Average) vs. Jorge De La Rosa (4-5, 4.97 ERA)**

There is no better way to start things off, than sending C.C. Sabathia to toe the rubber in game one of a series, especially at home. Sabathia will look to set the tone for the entire series in his start at Jacobs Field, where he has won all five of his decisions thus far in 2007.

C.C. will be looking to bounce back, following one of his worst starts of the season last time out. He allowed more than three earned runs for only the third time this year, but still got the victory. Sabathia is 4-2 over the last three seasons against Kansas City with 3.54 ERA.

Opposing Sabathia for the Royals will be Jorge De La Rosa, who offered very little opposition to the Indians in his previous start against them. Going out looking to finish off a sweep of the Indians in KC, De La Rosa instead got the Indian bats rolling for their series against Detroit.

The Indians patience paid off while facing De La Rosa, allowing him to walk seven in his 4 1/3 innings of work. Combine those walks with six hits, including a three-run homer to Jason Michaels, and you give up nine earned runs in your four plus innings of work.

**Wednesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:05 PM**

**Paul Byrd (6-1, 3.57 ERA) vs. Brian Bannister (1-3, 3.89 ERA)**

Paul Byrd will get the start in game two of the series for the Indians. Byrd will be making his fifth home start of the season, and will be looking for his fifth win at home. In his previous four starts at Jacobs Field, Byrd has allowed 11 earned runs in 26 innings pitched for a 3.80 ERA.

On the down side, Byrd has had a difficult time with his former

team over the last couple of seasons, going 0-2 in five starts last year. Over those five starts Byrd had an ERA over five, plus he had one start where he gave up six unearned runs in just over one inning of work.

Brian Bannister will head to the mound to take on Byrd. Bannister has been riding the elevator between Kansas City and Triple A Omaha. Since being recalled on May 13<sup>th</sup>, Bannister has one win and one defeat in four starts, with a 3.46 ERA.

In his last time out, Bannister came through with his best performance in the Major Leagues, going eight innings, allowing one earned run on two hits and striking out six against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

**Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 12:05 PM**

**Fausto Carmona (6-1, 3.29 ERA) vs. Odalis Perez (3-5, 5.74 ERA)**

Fausto Carmona will get the start in the finale of the three game series and the home stand. Carmona, much like Sabathia, will be looking to turn things around after getting pounded by the Detroit Tigers, who slapped Carmona around for 10 hits and five earned runs in six innings.

Carmona will be making his second start of the year against the Royals. In the first, he recorded a no decision, allowing three earned runs in six innings of work. He entered the sixth inning with a two run lead, but surrendered a two run home run to Mike Sweeney, before getting out of the inning.

Odalis Perez made the start against Carmona in Kansas City and will go against him once again on Thursday. Perez gave up three earned runs in six innings in that game and left the game without a decision.

Perez is a fine starting pitcher, right up to the point that you get runners on base that is. With the bases empty, Perez limits the opposition to a .248 batting average. With runners on base, the opposition hits at a .389 clip.

## **Royals Lineup**

When Mike Sweeney is in the lineup, the Royal batting order is much more impressive, especially against the Indians. Over the last three seasons, Sweeney has seven home runs, 20 runs scored and

25 runs batted in against the Tribe.

I can understand Sweeney's stats; he has always been a productive hitter, just a little injury prone. The real head scratcher is this John Buck character. He is a career .247 hitter with a little bit of power. Somehow against the Indians this guy turns into Johnny Bench. He will bring a .296 average with six home runs in 115 at bats, against the Tribe, into this series.

## **Royals Bullpen**

Old friend David Riske has done an admirable job for the Royals converting three out of four save chances and maintaining a 2.84 ERA. Octavio Dotel has returned from the disable list to take over the role of closer from a highly effective Joakim Soria (placed on the DL shortly after recording a save versus the Indians...that should teach him). Dotel recorded his first save of the season his last time out, working around two walks in one inning against Tampa Bay.

## **On Deck: The Battle of Ohio, Round Two**