

Series Preview: Indians at White Sox

Written by {ga=pup}

Monday, August 06 2007 7:00 PM -

They helped us out by sweeping the Tigers over the weekend. And now we need them to roll over for us. It's the hated White Sox, they of the 52-59 record, and surprisingly already in full blown spoiler mode. With the Tribe holding a tenuous lead in the Central, and the Tigers in the midst of seven in a row at home versus Tampa and Oakland ... this is a big series for us. Cris Sykes previews it.



Dilemma time. I really hate the Chicago White Sox. Ozzie Guillen and AJ Pierzynski and John Garland and Juan Uribe and Josh "Joe Crede Jr." Fields, I hate you all.

But I really appreciate that number you boys did on the Tigers last week, so real quick, thanks. Now roll over and die for us for the next few days, cool?

Jim Thome, don't think I forgot about you, I hate you too. I hate you even more than any of those other guys. What do Jim Thome and Carlos Boozer have in common? Both are scared to death of someone named C(e).C(e). That, plus the whole backstabbing thing.

Anyone remember when the White Sox played like they were building a softball team about 3 years ago? Then they blew it up and went with a lot of contact hitters with speed and won a World Series? Um, OK, either do I. Forget I said anything.

Tuesday, August 7th, 8:11 PM

Jake Westbrook (2-6, 5.40 Earned Run Average) vs. John Danks (6-8, 5.06 ERA)

Before I get into the preview. 8:11? As in 7:11 local time? I thought we were hard up for cash.

From here on out Jake Westbrook will now be called simply by "The Key". His success or failure is pretty much what the Indians do over the last couple of months. The Key has to continue to get closer to what we have grown accustomed to since he joined the Tribe and farther away from Jason Johnson.

His last two starts have definitely started him down the right path. 13 innings, nine hits and two earned runs will get you patted on the back every time. Now the key is to keep the momentum going into the your last 10 starts.

This will be The Key's third start against the White Sox this year. So far, he has not been very good against them. He was bailed out by his offense and bullpen once to get a no decision, but no such luck the second time. He has thrown 11 innings and allowed 11 runs. The 19 base runners allowed, 14 hits and five walks, have been bad but the three home runs have all come after those runners were put on base and accounted for seven of the 11 runs.

Over his career, The Key has not been all that much better versus the Sux than he has this year. A sub-.500 record (7-8) and an ERA over

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five and a quarter actually get improved upon when he takes on Chicago, in Chicago. At least a little bit better. The Key is four and four in Chicago, and his ERA is nearly one half of a run lower in Chicago than overall.

John Dank(s) will take the mound and oppose the Indians in the series opener. We have a John Danks here in Cleveland, well we actually dumped ours over to Buffalo and his name is Jeremy Sowers. The only difference between the two is we remained in the race while Sowers was taking sucking to a brand new level. The Sux fell out of contention while Danks stunk like month old Ozzie Guillen socks so they have allowed him to continue to suck.

Danks is a fly ball pitcher, pitching in a bad park for a fly ball pitcher. Think Eric Milton and Cincinnati. As a result, Danks allows home runs at a pretty high rate, like two per nine innings. Against most teams, that would be a real negative. Of course, against the Indians it means nine guys going to the plate and swinging from their heels, and missing a lot.

If the Indians can go back to their patient approach, Danks is the kind of pitcher they can beat up on, like in his start against them in July when they got him for five runs in five and two thirds innings. Or they can be the "Bad Indians" like in his April start when they only managed two runs off him in five and one third innings.

Wednesday, August 8th, 8:11 PM

C.C. Sabathia (14-6, 3.56 ERA) vs. Jon Garland (8-7, 4.60 ERA)

C.C Sabathia has made 24 starts in 2007 for the Cleveland Indians. In half of them, he has allowed zero, one, or two runs to cross the plate. In those twelve games, he has worked 89 2/3 innings, averaging over seven innings per start. In those 89 2/3 innings, he has struck out 85 batters while allowing only 77 hits. Go look up "Ace" in the dictionary, his picture might not be there yet, but if you check a thesaurus I am sure it is listed under synonyms.

Sabathia has made two starts against Chicago this year and as bad as their offense has been I am kind of surprised only one of them fell in the above category. He actually had the audacity to allow the White Sox three runs in one of the starts. Stiff. It's not like it was opening day, wait, yes it was. Now you only get one "f", stif.

You want to know another reason to like C.C. as the Indians ace? How about these numbers against the White Sox? 22 starts, 14 wins, three losses with 136 strikeouts in 136 innings. Any questions?

Jon Garland is crap. He does nothing on the mound that would make anyone shutter with doubt. I have seen friends strike out more at a bar in a single night than Garland has struck out all year. He is supposed to be a ground ball pitcher, but he sure does give up a lot of fly balls. I guess he gives you a lot of innings, unless he is busy getting tattooed for 25 runs over 9 1/3 innings, like he has in three of his last six starts.

Garland started one of the games in the first series of the year against the Indians, giving up five runs in five innings. One of the hits was a, gasp, Andy Marte home run. That is how Jon Garland's year started. It hasn't gotten too much better since.

That is also the story of Jon Garland, against the Indians throughout his career. In 21 starts, Garland has only won seven of 17 decisions. Garland has a 5.83 ERA against Cleveland, averaging just less than six innings pitched per start.

Thursday, August 9th, 8:11 PM

Aaron Laffey (0-1, 5.06 ERA) vs. Mark Buehrle (9-6, 3.07 ERA)

There have surely been worse Major League debuts than the Aaron Laffey's. Some well timed defensive help in the first inning allowed Laffey to make it through the Twin's lineup the first time on 33 pitches, facing the minimum number of hitters.

Things can really only get worse from that point forward, and they did. After getting spotted a couple of runs, three consecutive hits that included a pair of double got Minnesota even in the fourth. Then the Indians offense went into silent mode and Laffey went into rookie mode and the winning run was set up when he hit the leadoff batter and balked him to second.

Overall, Laffey was about as advertised. He pitched into the sixth inning, threw about 70% of his pitches for strikes and got two ground balls for every fly ball. He kept his team in the game and gave them the chance to win. For lack of a better way to describe his start, I must go with he was simply not Cliff Lee.

Laffey did not get the best of match ups for start number

two. The White Sox send their ace to the mound for the finale of the three game series, Mark Buehrle. If the White Sox could score some runs, Buehrle would be in the midst of his best season of his career.

Starting on June 10th, Buehrle has made 11 starts. In one, he was beat up by the Tigers for seven runs in six and one third innings. In the other 10, he has allowed 14 runs. He allowed three runs once; two runs four times; one run three times; and zero runs twice. All of that while averaging seven and one half innings per start.

Buehrle has made two starts this year against the Indians. In his first start, Ryan Garko lined a bullet off Buehrle and ended his day after only one and one third innings. In his second he was able to scatter 10 hits over five and one third innings, holding the Tribe to one run and picking up the victory.

Buehrle does not have a lot of success over his

career against Cleveland. The only American League team that Buehrle has a higher ERA against is the New York Yankees. Beuhrle has won eight of eighteen decisions against the Indians, and only three out of nine in Chicago.

Scoreboard Watching:

Detroit plays 3 versus Tampa Bay

New York plays 2 at Toronto

Minnesota plays 3 at Kansas City

Seattle plays 3 at Baltimore

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Up Next: The Bankees come to town for a weekend series!!!!