

## Changing Of The Guard

Written by {ga=paulcousineau}  
Friday, October 19 2007 7:00 PM -

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As if we all needed further reason to get fired up for the sixth game of the ALCS live from Fenway tonight, we've got a very interesting pitching matchup on our hands tonight. Boston throws Curt Schilling, a potential Hall of Fame candidate and one of the postseason's most prolific starting pitchers. For the Indians? The 23-year old Fausto Carmona, in his first year as a big league starting pitcher. Paul breaks down tonight's pitching matchup for us in his latest.



For better or worse, we populate a world eager to discard that which is deemed to be out-of-date or has been replaced by something considered bigger, better, stronger, or faster. Whether it be the latest technological gadget or a product &quot;guaranteed&quot; to make your life easier, Americans are constantly on the lookout for the next great thing.

I, to the surprise of some, am not one of those people as I view cell phones as a sort of necessary evil (sometimes I simply don't want to be reached) and recently &quot;upgraded&quot; my 5-year old cell phone (which the Verizon guy called an &quot;antique&quot;) for a new phone. Frustrated that he did not have the &quot;step above tin cans and a string&quot; (which is what I requested), I walked out with the bottom-of-the-line free phone that they begrudgingly give to you after making you aware (about 30 times) that better options exist.

My new phone sends and receives calls, which is all I care about. It may take pictures too, something that I refuse to investigate.

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But I digress.

Fully aware of my feelings on finding newer, fresher, and better products, throw them all out the window for tonight - when the Wily Veteran faces off with the Upstart Youngster in a battle of everything that has been versus everything that will be.

Curt Schilling enters tonight's Game 6 with a playoff resume unlike any other among current pitchers (although Beckett's getting close), which has been well-documented, and has among those playoff starts something to do with a bloody sock in some Game 6 a few years ago. Despite his Game 2 performance, he remains a battle-tested veteran who relies now more on guile and experience than he does the mid-90's fastball that he possessed a few years ago.

Here's the problem with Schilling (remember, I'm embracing the psyche of the American consumer) - he's old...his best days have passed him by. He's 40 and the Indians' hitters knocked him around hard enough in Game 2 to the point that he couldn't even get through 5 innings. He's gone on record as saying that he's afraid to lose Game 6 for fear of letting down the Red Sox organization, Red Sox Nation, and the men that he shares a locker room with.

Old and scared?

Surely, there must be something younger, better, and stronger out there to root for and to throw our collective weight behind.

Ah, yes, The Faustastic One.

Throwing a sinking fastball that Torii Hunter dry heaves at, that Tony Gwynn (or the man who ate Tony Gwynn) marvels at, whose repertoire of pitches compares to Kevin Brown in his Florida/San Diego heyday, Carmona is a walking &quot;Next Big Thing&quot;. At the prodigious age of 23, Fausto went 19-8 with a 3.06 ERA, a 1.21 WHIP, and more than twice as many K as BB. He is the rare power pitcher who has harnessed his stuff to be a &quot;pitcher&quot; and not just a &quot;thrower&quot; who gets by on talent and speed.

Carmona has, this year alone, evolved with each start to complement his nasty sinking fastball with a changeup and a slider that keep hitters off-balance and driving pitches into the ground for harmless groundouts (430 groundball outs vs.

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137 K vs. 131 flyball outs in 2007) sawing off bats and making good hitters look foolish and frustrated on a nightly basis.

Cool under pressure and unaffected by swarms of insects, Carmona possesses everything that anyone could want in a pitcher going into a potential Clinch Game to celebrate in the visitors' locker room in Fenway.

About 8:21 tonight, we'll find out if the torch will be passed from "what once was" to "what promises to be" as these pitchers will attempt to either prolong their stay at the top of the mountain or find the summit on a New England evening. Will it be a simple tale of "out with old, in with the new" tonight as Schilling could leave his crown of big-game ace on the mound for the young Dominican to assume?

At the risk of being presumptuous, I'll let you know when I'm taking pictures of the TV with my cell phone to commemorate the ALCS trophy being handed to Mr. Dolan and Mr. Shapiro.