

A Meltdown Of Eric Proportions

Written by {ga=pup}

Wednesday, October 24 2007 7:00 PM -

New papa Cris Sykes gets back into the fold after having his first baby (little girl named Ashley) and unleashes his sleep deprivation angst at Indians manager Eric Wedge, who he directly blames for The Collapse in the ALCS. Cris feels that Wedge's lassiez-faire attitude was contagious and that the team folded under the pressure as a result. And that this should have been The Year, and a huge opportunity was missed.

Well, folks, another season down the dumps. While the 2007 Indians provided us with plenty of great times, it will still be lumped in with all of the other seasons since 1948. Title-less. After coming so close to at least returning for another shot at the World Series, the bitter taste left in my mouth would make someone in a Keystone Marketing meeting proud.

There has been a lot of speculation since Sunday as to what happened. Many fingers pointed. Are C.C. Sabathia and Fausto Carmona choke artists? What was wrong with Grady? I have even heard maybe Paul Byrd forgot to get Pronk his HGH shipment in time. All of these make up separate pieces to the final puzzle. I only have energy to point one finger, at this time, and it gets pointed directly at ... Eric Wedge.

Eric Wedge is still nothing but a baby-sitter of this team. He does not manage. Take away a couple of sacrifice bunts in the Yankee series, and it is hard to find a moment in these playoffs that would make anyone say, "I sure am glad we have this guy in our dugout". Even his greatest move, starting Paul Byrd against the Yankees, was simply not making a choice. Did he make one move in the Boston series that made a positive influence on the outcome of that series? None that I can remember.

For all the lack of doing anything tangent during the games, that is not my biggest beef with Eric Wedge. That would be his every game is the same as every other game. I hate to break the news to you Eric, but that just isn't true. There are some games that take on a bigger meaning than other games. Does the last series against the White Sox in 2005 ring a bell. You remember the one, when the Sox gave you every chance with their 'B' lineup, but your one game is all the same mantra didn't allow the players to grab an opportunity and run with it. You remember, win one out of three to make the playoffs? Seems pretty familiar right about now, doesn't it?

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You see, this might have just been another series of games for you and your robotic Indians. Unfortunately, it is not that way for the fans of this team. The fans that were reluctant to return to the Jake, whether it was a hatred for Larry Dolan, or the no smoking signs, or just being afraid to get burned by you and your crew of clones once again. Those are the people that did return, because they love the Indians. And you stuck it deep into their backs. This was not just another series for those fans. It was redemption. It was life. It was the end of "The Cleveland Experience". Now, it is just another nightmare of a finish.

These playoffs were going to be different. We were the team that was doing all of the right things. We were going to roll through the super bankrolls and then fend off the upstarts from the National League. Instead, there will be no Joy in Cleveland, again.

There are emotions that need to be stoked (Grady and Hafner), there are emotions that need to be controlled (Sabathia and Carmona). What there never should be are emotions to repress. It is a game and is played best by those who are enjoying it. Repressing the emotions leads to the Pair of Aces to do things differently than they have done 60 times already in the season.

This was going to be different. Game 2 of the American League Championship Series will never be a day I forget, as it was actually overshadowed in my eyes. Overshadowed by the birth of my first child, a beautiful little girl who was going to change everything in my world. With her birth came the re-birth of Championships in Cleveland. I knew it. From the day I found out my wife was pregnant and my baby would be due in the middle of October, I knew everything was changing, including the luck of this city. Well, most everything changed, thanks to Ashley. Just not the fortunes of this great fan base.

With the laissez-faire attitude your project onto these players, how does one expect them handle pressure? Anyone who thinks a chance to send your team to the World Series, at home, with your best pitcher on the mound should be played with the same attitude and emotion as a Wednesday night game in June should

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be in no position to lead.

This is not meant to take any of the heat off the players. They played poorly. Even worse, they acted pathetically. The feeling they exuded in post game interviews of it being a great season, and being happy to have gotten as far as they did is embarrassing to me as well as a slap to the face of the fans, in my opinion. That attitude points to one characteristic. Losers. Losers are OK with not winning. Losers are proud to have gotten so close.

Losers, follow. And in our case, they have no choice, because a loser is at the helm of the ship. With a contract extension in hand.