

## 2010 Midway Season Superlatives

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Monday, July 05 2010 10:00 AM - Last Updated Monday, July 05 2010 10:33 AM

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With the All-Star break fast approaching and three months of the 2010 season in the books, it is hard to imagine there is still a lot of baseball left to play.

The first half has not been easy to watch with the Tribe sitting at the bottom of the standings and with yet another important player hitting the disabled list in Shin-Soo Choo; it's hard to hope for more wins in the second half than we had in the first.

If you put all the negatives and positives of the season so far onto ping pong balls and play the lottery, your chances of pulling a negative first far outweigh the chances of pulling out a positive. However that doesn't mean you should think about any of the possible negatives you could pull out.

What you should think about is what is possible in the second half. I know positive thinking is hard in the midst of a 32-49 season but hang with me; I promise it will be worth it.

I'm handing out some superlatives to Indians players for the rest of the season. We've got your standard titles like "Most Likely to Succeed" thrown in, but this is a baseball team we're dealing with, so expect anything, including cheesy joke superlatives that have been strategically placed.

### **Pitcher most likely to succeed in the second half**

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The Candidates: Justin Masterson, Fausto Carmona, and Mitch Talbot

I think everyone hopes that all three of these pitchers succeed in the second half, but after watching them this season; Masterson may have the most to gain.

Carmona has had a great year and everyone should be relieved that he may not be broke after all. Talbot has surprised us all and has been a story worth telling to anyone who will listen.

But Justin Masterson's start was rough and everyone was ready to throw him under the bus. Masterson is rewarding the Indians patience now by flashing some of that high-ceiling promise they believed he had as a starting pitcher.

As it stands now, Masterson has an opportunity to really take off from here. He's managed to figure out left-handed hitting enough to the point where he isn't letting every other left-handed hitter on-base and he's living to see past the fifth inning.

If he can get a little bit of run-support, he may even win some more games.

The Winner: Justin Masterson

## Biggest Drama Queen

The Candidates: Kerry Wood, Chris Perez, and Shin-Soo Choo

You may be wondering why Shin-Soo Choo was included in this one with two late inning relievers who've given us plenty of drama this season. Fact of the matter is, Choo has provided his own late inning drama, only the good kind of drama for a baseball fan.

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Still, that isn't enough to top some of the rides that Chris Perez has put us on this season. To his credit, Perez did well in his stint as closer and when he comes into the game I'm not as frightened as I am with Wood. I cannot in good conscious give this one to Wood though. Not with all the creative blown saves Chris Perez managed to pull off, but that is a different superlative.

Not to mention the bulletin board material that would follow with his post-game quotes to the media. Why all the drama, Chris?

The Winner Is: Chris Perez

### **Rookie most likely contend for AL ROY**

The Candidates: Carlos Santana and Mitch Talbot

Up until a few weeks ago, Mitch Talbot had a legitimate case to be in contention for the American League Rookie of the Year. While he still does, the baseball world has fixed their eyes upon Carlos Santana. He still has a long way to go to catch Brennan Boesch or Neftali Feliz but Santana does have the flash to make himself a contender, something Talbot doesn't have.

Face it; no one loves a well placed changeup.

The Winner: Carlos Santana

### **Opening day outcast most likely to return and redeem themselves**

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The Candidates: Lou Marson, Luis Valbuena, Matt LaPorta, and Michael Brantley

I promise Lou Marson being on there wasn't a joke; I just had to beef up the candidates a little bit. I fully realize Marson would either have to be on another team or change positions for this to even happen. Everyone thank their lucky stars for Carlos Santana if you haven't already.

Luis Valbuena would probably cleanly field a routine ball at shortstop before he put himself into the good graces of the world, which leaves us with two players acquired for CC Sabathia.

At least they are on equal footing in that regard. Matt LaPorta seems to be well on his way to establishing himself as what we've expected him to be for awhile now. He also has the sympathy vote of being in an abuse relationship with Russell Branyan. More on that in a second.

The Winner: Matt LaPorta

### Best Couple

The Candidates: Matt LaPorta and Russell Branyan, Joe Smith and Tony Sipp, and Travis Hafner and the Designated Hitter Position

The Matt LaPorta and Russell Branyan combo didn't work out so well and it ended in a nasty split. Good thing this isn't a high school class room. Either way things didn't end well with Branyan in general as it was said he wasn't wildly popular in the Tribe's clubhouse.

For awhile, Smith and Sipp went through a rough breakup with Joe Smith being sent to Columbus. But with Tony Sipp losing his footing and Smith back in Cleveland, they've been reunited to be that left-right combo out of the pen once again.

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Travis Hafner went on vacation for a week and a half, but there is no separating him from his true love, being the DH.

The Winner: Travis Hafner and the DH Position

### **Most likely to be savagely ripped apart when they are outright released**

The Candidates: Andy Marte, Anderson Hernandez, and Jayson Nix

As much as this fan base hates the Shapiro journey man (two this year with Nix and Hernandez, bonus!), Andy Marte has a track record with this franchise that is impossible to ignore.

I like Andy, but how that man doesn't fear for his life on the streets of Cleveland is beyond me.

The Winner: Andy Marte

### **Columbus starter most likely to finish year in Cleveland**

The Candidates: Carlos Carrasco, David Huff, and Josh Tomlin

This group isn't looking as stellar as it was supposed to look at the beginning of the season. Everyone thought there would be a mad-dash to get into the Cleveland rotation near the end of March.

Part of the luster was lost when Hector Rondon went down and Jeanmar Gomez got off to a rough start trying to adjust to the Triple-A level. But Carlos Carrasco is still around, Josh Tomlin

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has quietly put together a noteworthy season, and David Huff is back with the Clippers trying to make his way back to Cleveland.

This organization is itching to get Carrasco an opportunity to prove his worth at the major league level. It boils down to whether or not Carlos can put it together when he does get here so he can stay.

Ultimately, I think the pitcher with the most staying power is David Huff. I think he is going to benefit greatly from going down to Columbus and when he does earn his second opportunity in the rotation, he'll run with it.

The Winner: David Huff

### **Most creative loss**

The Candidates: [4/11](#) Vs DET, [4/28](#) Vs LAA, [5/5](#) Vs TOR, and [5/17](#) Vs TB

The first half of this season has seen plenty of losses, but it has also seen its fair share of colorful ones.

There was the walk-off wild pitch by Chris Perez early in April after he had walked in the game-tying run. Later that month, Perez made headlines when he criticized the Angels for dropping down a bunt to win the game right after he had come in to ballgame.

Not to be outdone and to further Chris' woes, Luis Valbuena booted a ground ball with two outs in the ninth inning against Toronto. Perez would then serve up a go-ahead home run to Adam Lind and the world decided then to set Valbuena's house on fire.

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The game-winning bunts didn't end in Los Angeles though as former Angels coach Joe Maddon put down the squeeze play for Jason Bartlett. John Jaso, who had reached base on a shady infield single earlier that inning, scored from third on the Bartlett bunt.

By far the most dazzling and unbelievable loss was the Howie Kendrick bunt. Bartlett's bunt was something that was planned, while Kendrick just realized the defense was playing back and took advantage of an opening. It was a split-second decision on the part of Kendrick and you can't blame Chris for being upset, but complaining to the media after wasn't right.

The Winner: Walk-Off Bunt Vs Angels

### Most Computer Savvy

The Candidates: David Huff, Jensen Lewis, Matt LaPorta, and Jason Grilli

The common thread here is that all four of these players are on Twitter. Now I'm not sure if you can count Jason Grilli as an official Indian, but in actuality, Matt LaPorta is the only one currently on the active roster.

Yikes. Grilli is probably the most tech savvy, but Jensen's tweets are far more entertaining. He's no [Matt Antonelli](#) or [Brett Anderson](#) though.

The Winner: Jensen Lewis

### Class Clown

The Candidates: Mike Redmond, Chris Perez, and Shelley Duncan

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Mike Redmond won the day he brought a shot up plastic deer into the clubhouse.

He also won a few years ago when he took batting practice in the nude. Thanks for playing everyone.

The Winner: Mike Redmond

### **Most likely to become a movie star**

The Candidate and the Winner: Chris Perez

This doubles as best celebrity look-a-like with Perez resembling *Eastbound and Down's* [Danny McBride](#)

. Perez wants a cameo and to my knowledge, they still haven't started filming season two yet.

He could be the younger, but less-timid, brother of Kenny Powers still in the minor leagues. I've clearly thought this through, but I'm only one man, and I alone cannot make it happen.

### **Most likely to not play again this season**

The Candidates: Anthony Reyes and Grady Sizemore

I know Grady Sizemore is out for the year, officially, but I'm not convinced Anthony Reyes will sniff the diamond before Sizemore gets back. Call it a hunch.

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The Winner: Anthony Reyes

### **Most Philosophical**

The Candidates: Jeremy Sowers, Matt LaPorta, and Manny Acta

Matt LaPorta has given us gems like “Is it bad that I’m dehydrated in one leg,” and “It comes naturally, I just have to think about it.”

Manny Acta meanwhile has gone as far as to call himself the Spanish Vince Lombardi.

I’m pretty sure if Jeremy Sowers ever opened his mouth, he’d win.

The Winner: Manny Acta

### **Most likely to leave town**

The Candidates: Kerry Wood, Jhonny Peralta, Jake Westbrook, and Austin Kearns

If you told me one of these players would most definitely be traded, I would honestly need some time to seriously think about who that might be. This is why I did just that and seriously weighed all the factors in this decision.

When push comes to shove Austin Kearns has the cheapest contract out of all these players and probably the least long-term value to this club. With other options in the outfield that can be given a shot, Kearns makes the most sense to move and because of his contract, he is the

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most attractive to other teams.

Even more so than Kerry Wood or Jake Westbrook, even though they probably would add more value to a team looking to acquire them. That isn't to say both will stay put though.

The Winner: Austin Kearns

### **Most likely to not leave town**

The Candidates: Kerry Wood, Jhonny Peralta, Jake Westbrook, and Austin Kearns

This is most definitely the harder of the two to pick. I think the club would love to part ways with Kerry Wood and his contract and if they would take on some salary, I actually think he'd be the easiest of the three (setting Kearns aside) to move because of his power arm and experience.

That leaves me with Jake Westbrook and Jhonny Peralta, two pieces of the Indians 2007 successful run. Peralta is cheaper but Westbrook fills a need that is more sought after and on top of that, you know what you are getting with Westbrook.

So I might as well throw one more factor into the decision. There really is no one in Triple-A busting down the doors to get into the rotation, and even if they were, the club would find a way.

Jared Goedert is making a big play to get some time and eventually, Lonnie Chisenhall is going to be ready. Jhonny Peralta will likely not get his optioned picked up for 2011 and while Westbrook's contract comes off the books, the club has at least entertained the idea of re-signing Jake after the season ends.

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Still, there is likely to be a lot more interest generated in Jake Westbrook and as we know when it comes to trades, it takes two to tango. Much to the chagrin of everyone in the universe, Peralta is the most likely to stay put.

The Winner: Jhonny Peralta

### Other Winners

Most likely to become president: Jeremy Sowers

Most team spirit: Mike Redmond

Most likely to go visit Cooperstown: Carlos Santana

Best hair: Chris Perez

Most athletic: Michael Brantley

Most likely to strike out 15 hitters in a game (The Strasburg): Justin Masterson

Most likely to walk 15 hitters in a game (The Masterson): Justin Masterson

Best dancer: Hector Ambriz (everyone deserves to win something)

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Most anticipated incoming freshman: Jordan Brown