

The Turning Fortunes from David Huff's Tweet

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, July 22 2010 12:00 AM - Last Updated Thursday, July 22 2010 4:17 AM



Is there a game that is better represented by the way it is actually played?

Just when you thought you've figured out how baseball works, it throws you an Adam Wainwright curveball, something that just leaves you sitting looking dumbfounded and confused.

Jeanmar Gomez, for the purposes of this discussion, is that Wainwright curveball. There was probably one valid reason for Gomez to earn the start he made on Sunday and it didn't have anything to do with his performance.

He's probably Columbus' fifth best starter the way things stand right now, maybe narrowly tied for fourth with Yohan Pino. Fourth or fifth, there were at least two better options for the Indians to go with before picking Gomez to make a spot start.

Most, myself included, would conclude that this is just one start for a last place team, in the grand scheme of things, the percentages of this having any relevance is likely measured with decimal places rather than a whole number.

However, what if I told you that this spot start, meaningless on a Sunday afternoon in the middle of July, might actually have changed the fortunes of two pitchers for the long term?

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Percentages likely go up, especially with a team looking to cement options in the rotation's future.

With Justin Masterson twisting his ankle, the spot starter going on Sunday became necessary, or else we may have just saw Carlos Carrasco come up on normal turn, pitch Tuesday, possibly get knocked around, and go back to Columbus.

I come to find that those curveballs I was talking about earlier always have a bit of a twist to them. Carrasco coming up and pitching Tuesday was the predictable outcome and because that was predictable, the results of that start would have likely been forgettable.

But because Jeanmar Gomez made his major league debut under the weirdest of circumstances, he perhaps had a start that many of us will look back on and remember as a turning point for not just his season and career, but Huff's.

After Gomez had went out and claimed his first major league victory by tossing six solid innings, David Huff took the mound for the Clippers and tossed seven shutout innings against the Norfolk Tide.

Huff was expecting to start Sunday, like Gomez, but he was expecting to start in Cleveland, wearing the block 'C' cap and the Tribe's Sunday best. But again, because he wasn't expecting to start for the Clippers, the two flipped and the results should be memorable.

If you don't know by now, Huff didn't make that start in Cleveland on Sunday because of a mysterious tweet that he claims was not posted by him, but posted nonetheless. Whether Huff posted it or not should be a moot point, because the only people that knew Huff was scheduled to start Sunday was David himself and the Cleveland Indians.

Logic tells you that if the Indians wanted to keep the news under wraps, there is only one party left that could have let the news leak out. Whether it was David or a family member or friend managing his account, the news got out and that didn't please the Cleveland organization.

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This whole story adds to the memory of Huff's start in Columbus and Gomez's major league debut, further proving the point I'm trying to make.

If this is just some normal run of the mill spot start, does Jeanmar Gomez go out and pitch the way he does? Probably not. Those baseball gods that I love ever so dearly wouldn't let it happen. Gomez's start had to mean something and for him, I bet it meant a whole lot.

As noted, Gomez had been struggling in Columbus to the tune of a 5.70 ERA through 18 starts. He's walked the most hitters out of any Clippers pitcher and holds the highest WHIP of any other pitcher on the active roster.

Clearly, he was one of the last options the Tribe should have turned to for this start. Josh Tomlin was an International League All-Star and the leader in ERA among starters. Carlos Carrasco has the most perceived upside of any of the starters and was coming off a positive outing in his last start.

Huff had already pitched in the major leagues this season and was 3-0 since getting called back down to Columbus.

The only thing that Gomez had working for him was the fact that he had 40-man roster eligibility and he hadn't yet pitched. That was enough to give him the nod over Tomlin and Carrasco and the tweet by Huff gave the Indians enough of a reason to make it all happen.

So we're set with Gomez in Cleveland, Huff in Columbus. At the end of the day, both took home victories and both have set their paths for the rest of the season. From here, Jeanmar has built up the confidence that he can win at a major league level that could carry him into turning around his season at Triple-A while David has built up momentum that may get him back to the major leagues.

It wasn't until Manny Acta announced Carlos Carrasco was a contender for the final rotation

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spot during spring training that David Huff kicked things into gear. Acta believed Huff needed a fire lit under him and intentional or not, this whole twitter fiasco may have lit a fire under him once again.

Hopefully it didn't just light a fire, but perhaps turned the light bulb on for Huff permanently so he can return to the major leagues and stick there, for good. He's shown that he can belong in the past, but he needs to show it consistently if he wants to be a fixture in the rotation.

If that is the case for both, we'll look back on Sunday July 18th and remember what happened. We can't forget. Someone lost a major league start because of twitter, that's something you don't forget because that's something you've never seen before. But in the process, one young pitcher may have found permanent motivation and another may have found the opening he needed to establish himself.

Unusual situations in baseball usually breed these outcomes and that's one curveball that you can anticipate.