

## The B-List: Most Misused Indian

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Monday, August 21 2006 7:00 PM -

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In Buff's latest contest, he asked readers for submissions for their most misused Indians player in 2006. Our winner, Ellen Kratofil, took home the prize for the winning entry ... and it was about a guy that hasn't even played a game for the Tribe this season. On what should be a day off for the talented Buff, he put together a nice piece paying tribute to the better entries he recieved on the Indians most misused player this season.



The &quot;Most Misused Indian&quot; contest was not quite as popular as &quot;Eric Wedge Haiku,&quot; but then, what is more fun that haiku? Bonus points to Haiku Winner Jonathan Cooper, who re-demonstrates his skill in the art ... but still comes up short, because ... well, frankly, because I said so.

If I may use the bully pulpit for a moment, there were a large number of players who weren't used optimally this season. It was reasonable, for example, for Jason Michaels to start the season in the 2 hole. He had a high OBP for Philadelphia, so there was reason to expect that he could &quot;set the table&quot; for guys like Hafner and Martinez here. Once he established that he was NOT going to put up a high OBP, though ... well ... leaving him in the 2 hole is just short of lunacy. (He's still there.) And just because Todd Hollandsworth is going to play left against some right-handed pitching is NO reason to slot HIM in the 2 slot: that was dumb, too. Jhonny Peralta is addressed below in the same regard.

It made no sense to use Aaron Boone as long as we did ... or let Casey Blake's career year rot in the 8 or 9 hole for as long as it did ... or have Kelly Shoppach play Left Bench for fifty games in a row ... or use Ed Mujica in Akron and Beefalo ... or let Tom Mastny refine his sunflower seed spitting technique at the expense of Carmona and Cabrera serving up taters ... or ramping up Betancourt so early in the season ... or sending down Rafael Perez and having a lefty-free bullpen for two months ... or using Ramon Vazquez in any role not involving a mop and bucket. Jake Westbrook and Cliff Lee redefined the term &quot;just one more inning&quot; early in the season. And as great as he's been, is leadoff really the optimal use of Grady Sizemore? (In the absence of another real leadoff hitter, sadly, this is probably, &quot;Yes.&quot;)

In any event, on to the real entries.

The winning entry goes to Ellen Kratofil, whose entry is something echoed on fan sites everywhere, but is well put and entirely true

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*Brandon Phillips. Ok, I've heard the reasons why he was traded for a bag of balls, or something like that. But he was playing well in Spring Training and knew he was competing for a utility role and still seemingly had a decent attitude. Fungus Man (a/k/a Ramon Vazquez) had an option, BP didn't. Why not let BP start the season as the utility man, keep the heat on Jhonny, and if he still couldn't adjust, then trade him. There is evidence that the worm had turned for BP. we should have AT LEAST found out if that could have happened with the Tribe.*

Thanks to everyone who entered: here are the other three entries. Our own Gameface64 had a wonderful submission, but stretched the definition of "Indian" too far and besides, it looks bad to pick another site writer. Still, it was the entry that made me laugh most:

*The most misused Indian isn't a player, it's the mascot. Poor Slider, having to do the happy dance on the dugout roof while behind him the players kick the ball around, run themselves out of rallies, or find new and amazing ways to lose one run baseball games.*

*Slider has nowhere to hide, while the players retire to the relative anonymity of the dugout or clubhouse. As a matter of fact, I'm convinced that the whole invention of dugouts was required to protect clubs like the 2006 Indians from being stoned to death with peanuts and ice cream containers.*

*Yep, Slider pretending to be happy and cheery for the team was quite the stretch. By mid June, Slider should have been down to his underwear, four or five day stubble on his face, wandering aimlessly through the stands with a bottle of Jack Daniels. Sharing a few shots of whiskey with some of the paying customers would certainly have been a more merciful use of mascot. Better yet, surly Slider could harass the wives and girlfriends attending with their men, which would certainly start some fights, and provide a nice distraction from the play on the field. And in his costume, drunk on JD, Slider could probably take a pounding and not even notice it. Sort of like the Indians' bullpen, since none of them committed hari-kari.*

Torre Grissom echoes my thoughts about Jhonny, as well as stating the obvious truth about the "closer competition":

*Most misused player? Hmmm, I'd vote for Jhonny Peralta who, with Travis Hafner batting behind him, was STILL useless with the bat most of the year, and Wedge's stubbornness kept Jhonny in the 3rd slot WAY past time. Wedge still bats him too high in the order, although most Prospectus types will tell you that lineup doesn't mean a hell of a lot. But a lot of good pitches were sure wasted this year; imagine how many more good pitches Grady would see if HE batted in front of Haf.*

*Fausto Carmona is my vote for most misused (and abused) PITCHER on the team.*

Finally, Jon Cooper gets honorable mention for Cheapest Shot, as well as a Farewell Haiku:

*The player most misused by the Indians this year has been Ramon Vazquez, simply because use = misuse (insert rim shot here).*

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*And, as a bonus, a non-Wedgian haiku:*

*Poor Ramon Vazquez  
Misunderstood by the Tribe  
Now sells insurance?*

Alas, poor Yorrick, he is a Bison instead. (It pays a bit better.)

Thanks to everyone who entered, and remember: teach your children to throw left-handed.