



The View from the Porch is designed to be purely opinionated and observational. Despite doing the Wahoo Week in Review throughout the last month of Spring Training and the first month of the season, I wanted a column that would be uniquely mine. A personal open forum to vent, rant, applaud, criticize, chastise while maintaining my unequivocal diehard fandom.

The title is simple. My favorite place to take in a game at Jacobs Field is from the Home Run Porch. The bleachers are amateur hour. Any seat with the word "box" on the ticket stands for one of two things. Stuffy and condescending or season ticket holder. In some instances, I guess it can mean both. The other place I most enjoy is the lower deck in right field, mostly because I can sit down at least two rows and/or ten seats away from the next closest person talking about everything other than the game. I don't mind the mezzanine, but ease of access is a factor and the Porch and lower RF are much more fan-friendly.

I have sat all around the ballpark during its 17-year existence and there is no better place for me than the Home Run Porch. I don't mind standing for the length of a game, I never have to move for the guy who absolutely has to get up during the middle of an at bat and no vendor ever gets in my way. Baseball is business to me. I want no distractions. I have never stood up in support of the wave. Applause and profanity are the only two things I offer.

The view is excellent and the occasional hilarious heckler can be highly entertaining. Most of them are just brutally lame, like the pain-in-the-ass uncle who always has to make stupid puns at holiday dinners. Case in point, I was in the bleachers for Wednesday's game, mostly because my fiancé had been on her feet all day at work and for two bucks more, she wanted to sit down. Jarrod Dyson dove for a flyball and missed. The kid to my left yelled, "Hey Dyson! You're no Hoover!" Kudos for originality, use of a clever play on Dyson's name, and avoiding the obvious

“You suck” while hoping the other seven people around him get that it’s a vacuum reference.

The following inning, an Ethan Embry look-alike (I’ll save you the IMDB trouble, he played Rusty Griswold in “Vegas Vacation”) yelled to Dyson “Nice blue hat, asshole!” Not only does this parallel the effectiveness of a lone sandbag in front of a New Orleans levee post-Katrina, it has the worth of an Otis Nixon Topps rookie card. These are the situations I deal with away from the Porch.

There is a certain comfort zone to being a fan. I stood outside the gate for three hours in advance of 2007 ALDS Game Two so that I could get my exact spot on the Porch. That length of time went up to four hours in advance of ALCS Game Five. It was my spot for Paul Byrd’s almost-no-hitter on Opening Day 2007 where I wound up spending the day looking like Bumble from Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

Anyway, now that I’ve exhausted the nearly-exciting backstory to the column’s title, how about our Tribe! They will enter play on Saturday with a record of 17-8. As I said in my WWiR columns the past couple of weeks, there were a lot of skeptics out there who were not sure they would win this many games by the end of May. Last year, they finished May at 19-31. Talk about improvement.

The topic that will be on every Indians fan’s mind entering Saturday’s game will be the ML debut of 2009 first round draft pick Alex White. White, the fifth best prospect in the organization before the start of the season according to TCF’s own Al Ciammaichella, features a plus fastball, a plus-plus splitter, and an average slider. Ciammaichella noted in his [Top Five Prospects piece](#) that the Indians instructed White to abandon the splitter and focus on the slider during the 2010 season.

I was already going to Saturday’s game, but Alex White is an extra-added bonus. I fully expected to see David Huff and it would have increased my chances of catching a Tigers home run ball. (In all my games on the Porch, I dropped a Peralta HR, caught a Blake ball on a ricochet, and got a beer shower from a Manny Ramirez BP HR, while my fiancé picked up the Budweiser-soaked ball. I also never leave my spot to chase one.) Instead, we see the slowly-changing philosophy of the Cleveland Indians front office. The safe move is to keep one of the 40-man roster scrubs and promote Huff. Instead, they are cutting the cord with one of their players and bringing up an exciting prospect.

From a game perspective, Huff would have made no sense in this game. The Tigers are right-handed heavy and scored nine runs off David Huff in his two starts against them. In eight lifetime May starts, Huff is 1-4 with an 8.31 ERA. From a financial and recent historical perspective, David Huff was the obvious choice. This is something to be excited about as an Indians fan.

View from the Porch: David Huff sucks and Alex White probably does not. Small sample sizes will unite if White starts out really well or if he starts out really poorly. The important thing here: The Indians are beginning to be proactive about guys who aren't good and guys who are.

Shin-Soo Choo is snapping out of it. Carlos Santana may be doing the same. After the two slugged back-to-back jacks on Thursday night, Choo raised his average to .250 for the first time since the seventh inning of Opening Day. Santana is still under .200, but is beginning to hit the ball with a little authority again. He also had a six-game walk streak snapped on Wednesday night.

Detractors are getting antsy about Carlos Santana continuing to bat cleanup while hitting under everybody on the team's weight (except probably Adam Everett). Manny Acta is sending a message of confidence to the kid. We still believe in you that you can hit the ball.

View from the Porch: Why change it for changing its sake? The team has won 17 of 25 games. Clearly, the formula is working, even if Santana is not hitting. Same with Choo continuing to bat in the third spot. These guys will hit. You do not add pressure on to guys who are hitting (ie, Hafner and Sizemore) by moving them around the lineup. Otherwise, you may have four guys struggling rather than two.

Josh Tomlin and Justin Masterson have been fantastic. Combined, they are 9-0 and have allowed 17 runs in 66 innings. With Masterson, there has always been hope that he would put it together and become a #2-#3 starter. The front office must have had that candle burning a long time to trade away fan favorite, perennial professional, and team leader Victor Martinez.

Josh Tomlin on the other hand, [termed as "an average guy" by @MacTriber11](#) , our esteemed

manager and cigar aficionado Manny Acta, has been a surprise. Imagine being an opposing batter against Tomlin. He throws 90 with a straight fastball. He cannot blow the ball by you. He gets a lot of foul balls and very few swings and misses. But yet, opposing hitters are batting .188 off Tomlin. There may not be a more infuriating pitcher in the AL right now for the opposition than Josh Tomlin. You look at his stuff and read the scouting report and he looks like a guy you should batter around the ballpark. You read the box score the next day and you went 0-for-4 and your team lost 6-2.

View from the Porch: If there was a sabremetric stat for testicular fortitude, Josh Tomlin would lead the league. He pitches like he has Aroldis Chapman's arm with Greg Maddux's intelligence and craftiness. Honestly, he is quickly becoming one of my favorite players. He's a no-BS cat with an incredible level of confidence. All of that as a 6'1" 190 lbs right hander.

As I attend games and wait for the bandwagon to once again drop off passengers to the corner of Carnegie and Ontario, I am concerned about the Cleveland baseball fan. Not necessarily the people who view this site, but more those who do not. While at the Jackie Robinson game where everybody wore the league-wide retired #42, a young boy asked his father why they were all wearing #42. His response, correctly put, was that it was to honor Jackie Robinson. When asked who Jackie Robinson was, he responded: the Indians first black manager. If I were grading this test, he would get a generous D-.

Props for knowing that Jackie Robinson wore 42. But, come on, man. Perhaps it was a Freudian slip or perhaps Darwin is knocking on his door, but to not know who Jackie Robinson was? It was beyond comprehension.

This episode was followed up by answering his son's "Who's batting?" question with "Milton Brantley".

View from the Porch: For the love of Jobu, man, get your facts straight. I can admit a bit of hyperbole on my part because I do not think that a majority of Cleveland baseball fans are this ill-informed, but I never take anything for granted anymore. I have been standing on the Porch and experienced the pleasure of a girl asking her male companion when intermission was.

Any and all stupid comments are superseded when somebody near me uses the term points to

describe runs.

With that, I leave you with my most recent Home Run Porch game, Friday night with Carlos Santana's walk-off grand slam. Outside of grown men referring to Tigers outfielder Ryan Raburn as "Gayburn" and raucously laughing as if they were at a Louis CK performance at Hilarities, watching a dramatic walk-off win brought back shades of the numerous come-from-behind/last at-bat wins I was on the Porch for in 2007. I'm not saying, I'm just saying.

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