

The calendar reads May 7 and I am already scoreboard watching. Is that presumptuous of me? Probably. Am I tempting fate? Could be. But is it entirely too fun to



stop doing? Of course it is. The fact that the Indians are enjoying their first two-plus game lead in the AL Central on May 7 since 1999 has to be cause for enhanced excitement and premature scoreboard watching. The 1999 team won the Central by 21.5 games.

Consider this. The 2008 Cleveland Indians were 16-17 on May 7. The 2009 Wahoos were 11-18 and the 2010 version was 10-17. In other words, we've waited three long years to experience a start like this, so, dammit, I'm going to enjoy it. This year's club scored nearly double the amount of runs in April (141) than last year's club (77).

I know that all of us in Cleveland are skeptics. The grass is always burnt out and grub-infested on the other side. Unless there is someone constantly blowing rainbows up your rectum, you, like most Clevelanders, are waiting for the other shoe to drop with this team. Seven last at-bat wins will probably not continue. The Cuyahoga Crushers will not continue to play .867 ball at Jacobs Field. But, I implore you, get in on the fun while it lasts.

There's enough in life to be pissed off, downtrodden, depressed, and apathetic about. Sports of all kinds are intended to be an escape. Sure, we sit there and watch superhuman athletes and grow a little jealous, muttering to the dog or cat that we wish we had that ability. Or, on the flip side, we complain about how bad a guy is or how much he sucks, full-knowing that 99.5% of us wouldn't even foul tip a fastball, catch a fade route, throw a fade route, make a free throw with 20,000 people watching or direct a soccer ball into the net with our heads.

This team is a likeable bunch. The role players have been fantastic, supportive, and come up clutch in big situations. The comeback players, Hafner, Sizemore,



and really Carmona, have performed well and been a key part of the success. Trade byproducts from transactions that ripped our hearts out are starting to look like bona fide Major League talent. They play clean, solid, fundamental baseball and have fun doing it. Our manager Twitpics a victory cigar after every Tribe conquest. What's not to love about this group?

Make no mistake about it, the AL Central has some serious problems. When the White Sox get a good start, the bullpen Hindenburgs. When the starter is mediocre and the bullpen is good, the offense needs a manhunt to track down. The Twins have relegated former top-three closer Joe Nathan to a mop-up role and Joe Mauer has been on the DL with a myriad of ailments ranging from the stomach flu to bilateral leg fatigue. The Tigers have been a disaster, but more on that in a moment. And the lovable loser labeled Royals are the other surprise of the division, promoting star prospect Eric Hosmer to take over for the slumping Hawaiian Kila Ki'ahue.

But, back to the Tigers. Being in attendance for both Friday and Saturday's games, the anguish of Tiger fans is very understandable and also tastes sweeter than pure Canadian maple syrup. While I want to sympathize with them because of their blue-collar town and their passionate fan base, the Pistons and Red Wings have enough titles. Not to mention, dating back to the almost-amicable Gary Sheffield days and looking at the present with current resident prick Miguel Cabrera, I don't like them.

That said, I had to empathize with them in one capacity. Magglio Ordonez looks like he is getting an IV drip of Zoloft between innings and Brennan Boesch had the worst three-game series I have ever seen. Why do I empathize with this? Because I have seen it over the last three years. Terrible pitch selection, awful plate discipline, and a handful of guys who just don't really seem to give a damn. Not to mention the enjoyment of an opposing team's bullpen four-alarm fire. It's nice to see it coming from the first base dugout.

View from the Porch: The AL Central is more wide open than a fairway on a beginner golf course. Nobody expects the Indians to play .677 baseball from now through September, but the

21-10 start has given them an opportunity to play slightly above .500 and still be in the thick of the race.



Think about this: If the Indians go .500 for the rest of the season, they will go 86-76 or 87-75. If the Indians play .520, they will go 89-73. Does 89 wins guarantee you this division? Not necessarily, but it gives you a terrific shot at winning it.

For Detroit to win 90 games, they need to play .581 the rest of the way (75-54). For Minnesota to win 90 games, they need to play .590 (78-54). For Chicago to win 90 games, they need to play .612 (79-50). We all remember the ridiculous 2005 Indians run to the postseason that fell short on the final week. From June-September, that team went 68-44.

I have always been a big proponent of having veterans on a ballclub. Some people, especially in the last five years, have hated this philosophy from Mark Shapiro and Chris Antonetti. Certainly, as with all older players, there will be swings and misses. I will stand firm on my opinion that Trot Nixon was an enormous help to the clubhouse during that magical 2007 run.

Orlando Cabrera is that player this year. Luckily, his on-field contributions have been solid as well. If the Indians were 14-16 through 30 games, the fans and media would be calling for the promotion of Cord Phelps/Jason Kipnis to take over the reins at 2B. In fact, even with the tremendous start, a small contingent (I'm

