



Sorry to disappoint everyone, but Pauly C. is out of town this weekend. No, there's no truth to the rumor that he is in San Diego scouting Heath Bell (as far as I know). So I'm back to do my best Manny Mota impression off the bench, while at the same time missing my own morning routine of waking up on Sunday and reading Pauly C's weekly article. Trust me, I'm as upset about this as you are. Regardless, here we sit on May 15, and after a rainout yesterday the Indians are 24–13 , with 9 of those wins coming in the last at bat.

They lead the AL Central over 2nd place Detroit by 3.5 games. Most of you are already well aware that the Indians are in first place, but it's still really, really fun to type that sentence. The weather in Northeast Ohio is starting to warm up, fans are coming out to support this team (33,000+ saw Travis Hafner's walk-off HR on Friday) and the "are the Indians for real?" articles from national writers are finally starting to slow down. [Tom Hamilton's home run call even has its own facebook page](#) . Any way you slice it, today is a good day to be a Clevelander, and there are still better days to come. With that uplifting intro out of the way, let's take a look on this Lazy Sunday at all the news that's fit to link...

Baseball Prospectus continually updates their [Playoff Odds Report](#) throughout the season. The odds are calculated based on both current standings as well as future projections. The good folks over at BP currently peg the Indians as having a 27.9% chance of making the playoffs, behind the Tigers who lead the division with a 52.7% chance. Interestingly, the 16-24 White Sox still have a 20.3% chance per BP, which seems awfully high when you consider their struggles this year. But this is a computer that takes in information and spits it out as it is programmed to do, so we can't really accuse it of any sort of bias. Let's just say I disagree that the Indians and White Sox have close to the same chance of making the 2011 playoffs. I do agree that there is a long way to go and plenty can happen between now and September. Another writer for BP, Jay Jaffe, [has his own system for determine who will and won't make the playoffs in 2011 based on the importance of the 30-game mark.](#)

Jaffe's research has found that 30 games into the season is enough to make some statistically

significant judgements about a team's playoff chances. The article is subscriber only, so I'll just take this snippet for you:

*At the 30-game point, the data—at least at the extremes, which is what's most pertinent to our discussion—become truly meaningful. Of the 115 teams that started 20-10 or better, just seven failed to finish with a winning record; of the 113 teams that started 10-20 or worse, only eight finished above .500. Combining the data, just 15 of the 228 teams on the extremes, or 6.6%, changed course by the end of the season. Looking at the 20-game data, 25 of the 215 teams—11.6%—on the extremes (14 or more wins or losses) changed course. And out of the 59 teams that started 22-8 or better, or 8-22 or worse, just one—the 1995 Phillies—made a complete about-face by season's end.*

Trust me when I tell you I am saving you a lot of complex math here, and we'll just skip to the part where Jaffe's formula predicts a 1st place finish and a final winning percentage of .529 for the Wahoo Warriors this year. The data is based on 70 years' worth of real, actual baseball, and while it does involve quite a bit of math that I don't really understand, I'm a lot more comfortable with Jaffe's numbers than I am with the BP Odds Report.





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