

## A Lazy Sunday on Building and Maintenance

Written by {ga=paulcousineau}

Sunday, July 17 2011 7:42 AM - Last Updated Sunday, July 17 2011 9:27 AM

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With the unofficial 2nd half of the season officially underway as the auditions for the 5th spot in Indians' rotation begin in full force this afternoon, let's all take a moment to realize that we are now more than half-way through the month of July with the Indians posting a 7-6 record in the month. While the Twins have bested the Tribe's winning percentage in July, if this month is truly the time that the contenders start to separate themselves from the pretenders (the equivalent of "Moving Day" in a golf tournament), the Indians have kept pace in a flawed division, remaining atop the AL Central...a reminder that I'll continue to throw out there in order to provide the proper perspective to a fanbase that is all too quick to see the warts of the Indians while ignoring the ugliness in the rest of the division.

With that in mind, realize that the Tigers' run differential is now -27 in the month of July and that the Indians are the only team in the AL Central with a positive run differential (at +8) this late in the season. Does that slim positive run differential evoke all sorts of confidence in terms of the Indians' chances against the heavyweights of the AL in September and October?

Probably not (and 4 of the 5 AL East teams have better run differentials than the Tribe), but it is July 17th and the Indians are the lead horse in an AL Central race that they've lost sight of by the second turn in the past three years, so excuse me while I enjoy it before getting into the turns of the rumor mill and into what could actually be a very real concern for the Indians going forward this season.

OK enough enjoyment; let's get loose on a Lazy One...

With the rumor mill spinning as it always does at this time of the year and since everyone else is attempting to measure the potential impact that Ryan Spilborghs or Reed Johnson could have on the Indians' season, I'll embrace the lunacy for a little while before getting into the topic of

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the day because, [as Craig Calcaterra wrote](#), “Crazy season is upon us. The semi-annual rumor-fest, in which people hear this and that and run wild with speculation. Occasionally — very occasionally — there is actually some hard news in all of this nonsense...you gotta keep your critical-thinking skills handy when it comes to this sort of thing.”

So let's just bask in “crazy season” for a moment as, I'm not sure if you've heard this – but Beltran, Ludwick, and Willingham are three names to keep in mind for players that the Indians might add. While I've attempted to rationalize adding a piece like Mike Morse that helps fill a long-term organizational void (versatile RH bat) with others suggesting Hunter Pence (though he will command a king's ransom, rightly or wrongly, as the “Face of the Astros) and more, there is no question that this is the time of year that names come flying at us and we try to rationalize whether this player would be a good addition or that player fills a need for the Tribe.

With that in mind, [B-Pro's John Perrotto has a list of players that he could see getting moved at the deadline](#), with the usual suspects of Ludwick, Francoeur, Willingham, Melky, Beltran, Ryan Spilborghs, Reed Johnson, and Dexter Fowler all making the list, among others. However, perhaps the more interesting tidbit passed along by Perrotto is the assertion that “if the White Sox drop out of contention in the American League Central in the next two weeks, look for them to take calls on right fielder Carlos Quentin at the deadline”, which brings us back to the idea of the next two weeks having a profound impact on the AL Central for this year and beyond. Also included in Perrotto's column is the nugget that “the Tigers are pushing hard to add a starting pitcher, and Dodgers right-hander Hiroki Kuroda is their top trade target” and while it's likely that the Tigers will add something – usually a high-profile name...usually represented by Scott Boras (not that it means it's a high-quality player) – you can almost already script the howls on July 31st and August 1st, regardless of what moves the Indians do or do not make.

Reason being is that everyone seems to want that “BIG BAT” and since there is only one of those that would fit the Indians' needs in Beltran, perhaps it is noteworthy to pass this along [from SI.com's Jon Heymann in a piece in which he also identifies pieces that may \(or may not be available\)](#)

as Heymann passes along the opinion that the Indians' desire for Beltran may not even matter all that much because of Beltran's right to approve or veto any trade because of language in his contract. Heymann presents the potential Beltran/Indians situation thusly:

*“The Indians are looking for an outfield bat. But Beltran doesn't look like a match for them because while they are having a surprising season, it might be hard to imagine a storybook finish. So they are one contender Beltran is unlikely to approve in trade.”*

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