

Vote Kipnis; Vote Often

Written by {ga=riverburns}

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Jason Kipnis isn't the first ballplayer to take his talents from the schoolyard in Tempe to the shores of Lake Erie. Off the top of my head, the names of former Arizona State Sun Devils Odibe McDowell and Chris Bando come to mind, not to mention the cup of coffee that was the Travis Buck era in Cleveland, but a name like Kipnis might have some staying power in Northeast Ohio baseball lore.

With Kipnis holding things down at Second Base for Manny Acta's club, it's easier to bury the demons of whatever Eric Wedge did to make Brandon Phillips become an All-Star elsewhere.

I know, with less than a year of big league service under his belt, it might be a little early to ask our statue guy to start creating a mold for the youngster's place next to Bob Feller, but he's off to a good start.

Of course, the fans who travel Kansas City and the millions watching around the world on FOX may not be aware of the Indians Second Round Pick from 2009 when he's absent from Ron Washington's 33 next month for the Midsummer Classic. Even if we're not sure whether the Royals come from the Kansas City in Missouri or Kansas, we Cleveland fans know the recently renovated Kauffman Stadium and Royals fans probably know Jason Kipnis by now.

That doesn't mean anything in terms of him being in the starting lineup, or even on the American League bench on July 10, but he has certainly warranted consideration for a roster

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spot, if not justification to win the popularity contest at MLB.com

Without question, the impact he's had on the Indians cannot be denied. We can start out with the fact that the Indians drafted him, developed him, and got him out of the bus leagues rather expeditiously. No one else in the starting 9 can really say that, but we all hope that we can attach that to 2008 First Round Pick Lonnie Chisenhall soon.

It's nice that not only is a high draft pick contributing so soon, but that they successfully converted a player out of his defensive position and it's been a nice fit.

Also, early returns indicate that Kipnis is the best 2B of a draft that saw Dustin Ackley go to Seattle with the second overall pick.

Of course, only time can reveal how accurate that statement will be in the long run.

It's easy for me to see that Kipnis is already an All-Star caliber player, but the people who vote are having a difficult digesting something that is probably the truth. I've seen the ballots, both online and in hard copy, so I know that Jason Kipnis is technically an option for voters to choose, but unless we have a Hanging Chad scandal on our hands, it's apparent that they aren't choosing him over the other American League options at the position right now.

If you look at the top 5 vote getters, you'll see obvious first-ballot Hall of Fame names like Chris Getz and Robert Andino along with the usual suspects, but you won't see Kipnis.



Robinson Cano is the incumbent at the position, he has to be in Kansas City as captain of the Home Run Derby team, and his batting average is a little higher than his Cleveland counterpart.

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So, you figure that he has that going for him.

Plus, he plays for the New York Yankees, so that probably helps his cause.

Playing for the Red Sox probably helps the former Sun Devil Dustin Pedroia out as well, even if a slightly higher batting average than Kipnis masks his deficiencies in other Triple Crown categories.

But, I'm not here to sell you or any All-Star voter on Yankees/Red Sox fatigue; I don't have to because it's yet another Arizona State guy having the ballot box stuffed to his benefit.

It isn't easy to make any case against Texas's Ian Kinsler; this former Sun Devil plays on a better team, belts a lot more extra-base hits, and it will be his every day skipper filling out the lineup card in Kansas City next month.

Andino and Getz round out the Top 5, and that is fairly baffling if you pay any attention to the numbers. Though it seemed Andino homers every time the Orioles come to Cleveland, he is not the offensive juggernaut that Indians pitching seems to bring out in him. I see a guy hitting under .250 with run-of-the-mill middle infielder numbers across the board, and can't understand what 317,000 + voters saw in him, but Baltimore's hot start may have launched him into the #4 spot in the voting as of last weekend.

Even though Getz hasn't played since May 21, and has been outplayed by his understudies, you can understand the hometown guy making a run.

Yuniesky Betancourt and Irving Falu have done an adequate job filling in for Getz, who might actually be up there in the voting with Kipnis in the voting moving forward.

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