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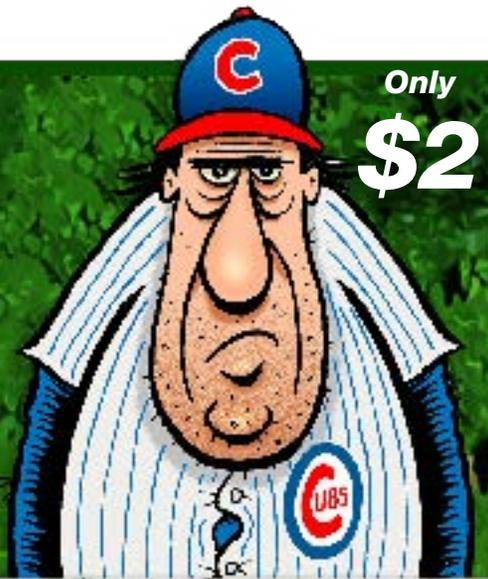
THE IVY DRIP

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Went Down**

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Then?**

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HOW ARE THINGS ON THE WEST COAST?

The Cubs enter the final turn of the season and, of course, all the drama is taking place off the field. You'll spend the next few days or weeks hearing so many rumors you'll think you're back in high school, with whispers of failed medicals or furious offer-topping

from "mystery teams" and the like. Of course, there's still baseball to watch, though it seems so many have actually forgotten about that.

The Cubs headed into the break with a pretty plucky split of a four-game series against powerhouse and

Mothers For Drunk Driving spokesmen St. Louis, before dropping two of three in Denver to start the unofficial 2nd half of the season. The fact that the Cubs won a game there is kind of news, because it's been a struggle for them in the past. Same goes for keeping Carlos Gonzalez under 17 home runs for the series, as he's feasted on the Cubs' intestines for a few years now.

The final two series showed some encouraging signs from two possible cornerstones of the franchise. Starlin Castro has woken up from his malaise, however briefly, and is hitting .350 over his last 10 games. Of course, he hasn't walked in any of them and almost all the hits have been singles, but a journey of 1,000 miles and all that.

It's more the eye-test with Starlin, as he's having some of his best swings of the season. He's behind the ball, staying inside of it, and is balanced instead of lunging and just hoping to poke something over an infuriated 2nd baseman's head. If he sticks with it, it should only be a matter of time before he's driving balls to both gaps again soon.

Another one was Jeff Samardzija bouncing back from two consecutive starts where his brains were laid out all over Wrigley Field. Both the Pirates and Angels had made him sorry he bothered in the first place, and facing the NL's best offense at the space-station vodka party that Coors Field can turn into looked pretty daunting.

But Shark adjusted, threw less fastballs that had lost some of their bite and surprised the Rockies with an ever-improving slider. He threw that pitch far more in that start than he had in any other start this season. Not only was it heartening to see Shark bounce back from his first real bad stretch, but also do it by going to a Plan



CARMEN + Matt

Where are they
going?

From the Editor

I keep telling myself I won't do it again. I'm trying to show the patience that this Cubs' rebuild requires. It gets hard sometimes though, doesn't it?

Lord knows I've seen enough Cubs "prospects" come up, billed as sure things and future stars and all they needed was time. Felix Pie, Cory Patterson, Kevin Orie, and so many others. Did Bobby Hill even make it to Wrigley? Of course we're still waiting on Pat Cline and Brooks Kieschnick and all the others too.

So now when one comes up, I try and be overly negative, I guess. I look for all the faults and shortcomings, just so I won't be disappointed when they likely flame out (and it is more likely, because how many more players are there in the minors than the majors? Someone somewhere at some time thought they all had a chance).

Junior Lake isn't considered one of the prime prospects in the Cubs system. He probably wouldn't even be up if all their centerfielders hadn't broken against an outfield wall. Maybe he's back to Iowa as soon as Brian Bogusevic can walk without his hamstring needing a beer and a smoke. Or maybe not.

Maybe because of his unheralded billing, I'm more excited to see what Lake can do. It's probably not much. Maybe it's more. But it's one more thing to watch this season, right?

And Lake has that...thing, because I can't think of another word, that athletic grace, that smoothness, that sometimes makes things look easy. It doesn't mean he'll be a good player, and in fact he could still be a bad one. Felix Pie had it at times too.

It's hard to describe. Lake sort of has that perfect baseball build -- then again, so does Brett Jackson. But that lean, yet defined, tall look. When he runs it looks like his feet never actually touch the ground. He glides across the field. Compare that with Soriano, who you can hear coming without even looking.

The swing is free and easy too, without too many hitches. Sure, it's a bit long and is going to whiff at too many breaking balls, you can already tell. But still, it looks the part, doesn't it?

That's probably what seduces so many old scouts to this day, and something baseball has moved on from. It doesn't matter how it looks, or not as much as it is used to. Just because a guy can make the game look easy doesn't mean it is.

I'm sure a scout would look at Lake, and after pointing out all the holes his game, would still gleam about the confidence he seems to ooze. He looks like he thinks he belongs and maybe that's important.

It has to be, right? Because baseball is filled with failure. Even when you're good, you fail seven out of ten times at the plate. The entire sport is constructed to make you doubt yourself. You have to have that inner belief, even when you're getting kicked around every game. You can't also just turn it around immediately. In other sports you can score one touchdown or goal and things are all right again. But baseball, you have to dig yourself and move on at-bat by at-bat, game by game. It can take a week.

One 2-for-4 day doesn't mean you're out of it. Three of them don't either.

I don't know; I'm just glad there's one more thing to watch in this Cubs season. Sometimes I find myself tuning out for a bit after Castro and Rizzo hit, because what does the rest really matter? And maybe Lake won't matter in the long run. But we don't know that he won't. And that keeps me watching and interested and even a little excited.

Worst case? He's what we talk and laugh about when the Cubs are good again, the way Bears fans talk about Kyle Orton or Hawks fans about Mark Bell and Kyle Calder. But I hope for more.



Sam Fels

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2013 MLB STANDINGS

National League

East	W	L	W-L%	GB	Home	Road	Rdiff
ATL	55	43	.561	-	31-15	24-28	+74
PHI	49	50	.495	6.5	26-21	23-29	-46
WSH	48	50	.490	7	27-21	21-29	-24
NYM	43	51	.457	10	19-28	24-23	-26
MIA	35	61	.365	19	21-27	14-34	-98

Central	W	L	W-L%	GB	Home	Road	Rdiff
STL	59	37	.615	-	29-17	30-20	+129
PIT	57	39	.594	2	32-18	25-21	+44
CIN	55	43	.561	5	32-17	23-26	+65
CHC	43	53	.448	16	22-26	21-27	-15
MIL	41	56	.423	18.5	25-26	16-30	-56

West	W	L	W-L%	GB	Home	Road	Rdiff
ARI	51	47	.520	-	27-20	24-27	+8
LA	50	47	.515	.5	27-23	23-24	-8
COL	48	51	.485	3.5	28-22	20-29	+6
SF	45	52	.464	5.5	27-21	18-31	-39
SD	43	56	.434	8.5	27-23	16-33	-63

American League

East	W	L	W-L%	GB	Home	Road	Rdiff
BOS	60	40	.600	-	33-17	27-23	+91
TB	58	41	.586	1.5	34-19	24-22	+65
BAL	56	43	.566	3.5	29-20	27-23	+34
NYY	52	46	.531	7	28-23	24-23	-2
TOR	45	52	.464	13.5	25-24	20-28	-17

Central	W	L	W-L%	GB	Home	Road	Rdiff
DET	53	44	.546	-	29-19	24-25	+90
CLE	52	46	.531	1.5	30-19	22-27	+29
KC	45	50	.474	7	24-23	21-27	-9
MIN	41	54	.432	11	23-24	18-30	-52
CWS	39	56	.411	13	21-22	18-34	-56

West	W	L	W-L%	GB	Home	Road	Rdiff
OAK	57	41	.582	-	30-15	27-26	+63
TEX	54	44	.551	3	27-22	27-22	+16
ANA	46	50	.479	10	26-26	20-24	-5
SEA	46	52	.469	11	25-25	21-27	-43
HOU	33	64	.340	23.5	17-35	16-29	-155

TOP 10 LIST

Top 10 Reasons Giants Are Struggling

10. Leftover Bonds' PEDs finally ran out.
9. That weird lit-up thing in McCovey Cove is far too distracting.
8. Team got into Sierra Nevada in the stands.
7. Tim Lincecum's stash seems to keep disappearing and more frequently.
6. Brian Wilson put a curse on them now that no one is paying attention to him.
5. A team with whose best player is named "Buster" can really only be so good for so long.
4. Though he has two rings, Brian Sabean doesn't really have any clue.
3. Zito's insistence on doing yoga in the locker room naked is freaking everyone out.
2. Jim Harbaugh stole all their karma....and their souls.
1. They got two rings in three years with an offense that couldn't break wind...fuck 'em.

Chicago Cubs

Hitters

Starting Lineup

Wellington Castillo - Catcher - Bats/Throws: R/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
274	65	2	15	1	6.2 %	22.6 %	.342

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
22.6 %	.262	.330	.347	.676	.300	3.7	1.2

Anthony Rizzo - 1st Base - L/L

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
410	88	14	56	5	10.5 %	18.0 %	.270

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
19.9 %	.244	.332	.449	.780	.338	5.9	1.7

Darwin Barney - 2nd Base - R/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
327	67	6	28	3	5.8 %	10.7 %	.233

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
18.3 %	.224	.274	.348	.622	.268	10.6	0.9

Starlin Castro - Shortstop - R/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
421	99	6	29	8	3.6 %	17.6 %	.290

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
19.6 %	.247	.283	.354	.637	.281	-6.7	-0.4

Castro is seeing more pitches than ever before, his pitches per PA is up about 10%

Luis Valbuena - 3rd Base R/L

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
301	60	9	31	1	13.6 %	15.6 %	.255

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
16.3 %	.236	.347	.402	.748	.328	7.3	2.0

Startling that Valbuena can have a career-high OBP with this number so below league average.

Alfonso Soriano - Left Field - R/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
374	92	17	51	10	3.5 %	22.7 %	.293

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
20.1 %	.259	.289	.476	.765	.326	4.3	1.3

Junior Lake - Everywhere - R/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
13	5	0	0	1	7.7 %	30.8 %	.625

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
37.5 %	.417	.462	.500	.962	.423	-0.7	0.1

Obviously only three games, but Lake is seeing almost four pitches per at-bat, which is far more patient than we were led to believe he would be and would lead the team.

Nate Schierholtz - Right Field - L/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
286	69	11	35	5	7.0 %	15.4 %	.282

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
20.9 %	.266	.326	.490	.817	.348	1.2	1.4

Bench

Dioner Navarro - Catcher - L/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
142	36	8	19	0	10.6 %	14.1 %	.283

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
22.4 %	.286	.359	.508	.867	.373	-1.7	0.8

Cody Ransom - Utility - R/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
118	27	9	20	0	13.6 %	27.1 %	.305

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
17.6 %	.270	.376	.620	.996	.423	0.8	1.6

Julio Borbon - OF - L/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
106	19	1	3	7	11.3 %	18.9 %	.250

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
16.1 %	.204	.295	.280	.575	.264	-2.6	-0.4

Cole Gillespie - OF - R/R

PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP
13	1	0	0	0	15.4 %	0.0 %	.091

LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	Fld	WAR
0.0 %	.091	.231	.091	.322	.131	1.1	0.0

Chicago Cubs

Pitchers

Starters

Jeff Samardzija - R

GS	IP	W	L	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
20		6	9	9.18	3.22	1.03	.303

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
1.54	13.4 %	1.28	3.91	3.66	2.0	0.7

James Russell - L

G	IP	SV	BS	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
48	36.0	0	6	7.25	2.50	0.50	.291

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
0.77	4.3 %	19.4 %	1.17	2.75	3.08	0.8

Edwin Jackson - R

GS	IP	W	L	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
19	107.1	6	11	7.71	3.19	0.75	.315

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
2.05	10.3 %	1.41	5.03	3.63	1.5	0.3

Jackson has gotten more economical lately, not cracking 100 pitches in July but getting to the 7th twice.

Pedro Strop - R

GS	IP	W	L	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
37	29.0	0	3	9.93	5.28	1.24	.266

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
1.81	19.0 %	23.4 %	1.45	5.59	4.60	-0.1

Strop hasn't given up a run since becoming a Cub.

Travis Wood - L

GS	IP	W	L	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
19	122.2	6	6	6.31	2.79	0.66	.227

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
0.77	5.8 %	1.04	2.79	3.58	2.2	0.1

Michael Bowden - R

G	IP	SV	BS	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
17	19.1	0	1	5.12	3.26	0.00	.254

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
0.83	0.0 %	25.0 %	1.14	3.26	3.15	0.2

Carlos Villanueva - R

GS	IP	W	L	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
11	66.2	1	5	6.07	2.83	1.08	.277

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
1.30	11.9 %	1.24	4.45	4.29	0.5	0.0

Blake Parker - R

G	IP	SV	BS	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
19	19.1	1	0	8.84	3.72	0.47	.273

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
0.65	3.8 %	23.2 %	1.24	2.79	3.15	0.2

Chris Rusin probably will get the spot to start, and he's been OK in Iowa with a 3.66 ERA. But it will get ugly at points.

Matt Guerrier - R

G	IP	SV	BS	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
42	38.0	0	2	5.92	3.55	0.71	.311

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
1.11	6.5 %	19.2 %	1.45	4.50	4.02	-0.1

Relievers

Hector Rondon - R

G	IP	SV	BS	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
26	30.1	0	1	7.42	4.45	1.48	.298

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
1.24	14.7 %	20.8 %	1.58	5.93	5.32	-0.4

Kevin Gregg - R

G	IP	SV	BS	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP
35	34.1	18	2	9.17	3.67	1.05	.256

GB/FB	HR/FB	LD%	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
0.97	11.8 %	25.6 %	1.19	2.88	3.75	0.2

Anarchist's Brunch

Trade Negotiations

Originally published on CubsDen.com on Sunday.

I feel like such a fifth wheel here at Cubs Den this time of year. John and Tom kick so much ass getting information, scouting prospects and reporting and breaking down rumors that my posts kind of feel like the Cialis commercial. If only I had some reliable sources and some people to talk to. Of course, I can always make those people up. And I did. So after talking to my imaginary sources, here is a blow by blow of how the Matt Garza trade talks went...

RING RING!

John Daniels: This is Jon Daniels.

Theo Epstein: Jon baby. Theo Epstien. Let's stop all this messing around and see if we can get this Garza trade done.

JD: Sounds good to me. I think Yu Darvish just hurt himself ordering a snow cone. How about Mike Olt and a pitcher?

TE: Mike Olt? Isn't he hitting .140?

JD: That's only because his right eye is clouding up. We have medicine for that. Hold on, I got another call.

RING RING!

JD: This is Jon Daniels.

Jed Hoyer: Jon baby. Jed Hoyer. Let's stop all these shenanigans and see if we can't get Matt Garza on a plane to Texas.

JD: I was just talking to Theo about Matt Garza...

JH: That guy's just a figure head. He doesn't know what he's doing. I'm the man. Anyway, we're thinking Martin Perez and maybe that Sardinas guy...

JD: Perez? Sardinas? Epstien was talking about Mike Olt and a pitcher.

JH: See? Doesn't really know what he's talking about. Besides, he's too concerned with the Pearl Jam concert.

JD: I gotta think about it.

JH: Don't think too long.

RING! RING!

Theo Epstein: You're talkin' to Theo.

JH: T. Wassup. It's the Jed Man. I'm really close to getting Perez and Sardinas for Garza.

TE: No. No no. I'm close to getting Mike Olt and a pitcher.

JH: Mike Olt? Isn't he hitting like .090?

TE: That's only in June. Or something. To be perfectly honest, I'm really more concerned about this Pearl Jam concert. You bring this home. Why don't you call Gordon Wittenmeyer and plant a story that we're talking extension with Garza's agent.

JH: Better yet, I'll call Sullivan and tell him that contract talks are going nowhere.

TE: Why would you do that?

JH: Cause Sullivan never gets anything right...

TE: Sounds good. I'll be playing Golden Tee with Eddie Vedder.

RING! RING!

JH: Jed Hoyer:

JD: This is Jon Daniels. Did I just read correctly that you're talking contract

extension with Matt Garza? I thought you were trading him TO US!???!!

JH: Well it's not like we're coming together on names. One day it's Olt. One day it's Perez, next day it's Ramirez. Who can keep track?

JD: THAT'S BECAUSE THERE'S TWO OF YOU AND YOU KEEP ASKING FOR DIFFERENT PLAYERS!

JH: It's a new age JD. Tell you what. We'll take the whole bag. Ramirez, Perez, Edwards, and we'll even take Mike Olt off your hands too.

JD: Throw in Russell.

JH: Can't. he's pitching tonight.

JD: YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE A GAME. IT'S THE ALL-STAR BREAK!!!!

JH: What can I say? Dale has him warming up as we speak.

JD: (sigh)...send over the medicals.

RING RING!

TE: FOR THE LAST TIME VEDDER, IT'S NOT RAINING. GET OUT THERE AND PLAY.... Theo.

JH: It's Jed. the deals practically done. I'm getting a Ramirez, a Perez and Mike Olt.

TE: Mike Olt? Why did you ask for him?

JH: YOU asked for him.

TE: Whatever. I just want this thing over. Hopefully Daniels doesn't notice the small family of gerbils living inside Garza's elbow...

RING RING!

TE: Hello.

JD: THIS IS JON DANIELS! DID YOU KNOW THERE'S A SMALL FAMILY OF HAMSTERS LIVING IN MATT GARZA'S ELBOW?!?!?!?

TE: Maybe.

JD: WHAT do you mean maybe?!?!?

TE: Well, we think it's gerbils, not hamsters. If you look closely, you can see some tails....

JD: Well the deal's off....

TE: I'm afraid you're going to have to reconsider.

JD: How do you figure?

TE: Well a report is about to come out that the medical reports on one of the prospects you're sending us shows an injury or two....

JD: Dammit, did you send Garza's medical records to Sullivan?

TE: I'm afraid we did. How soon can we put Garza on a train to Texas?

JD: Train? What about a plane?

TE: Ricketts can't really afford a plane ticket right now.

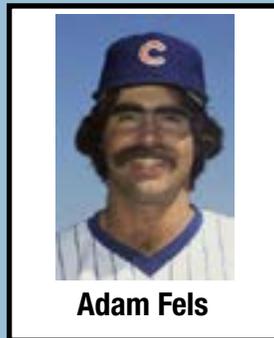
JD (SIGH)...call you back....

RING RING!

TE: Finally.... JD, is it done?

Operator: This is AT&T we're cutting you off because you haven't paid your bill.....

TE: But....but.....but we're so close to getting this nightmare done.... CRANNNNNNNNEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Adam Fels

CUBS SPOTLIGHT

Tiger Castro?



It'll still be a while before we know if Castro's surge the past week or two is a full slump-breaker, or merely a blip in an otherwise uninterrupted downward trajectory, much like Iggy Pop's that highlighted Sick Boy's Unifying Theory of Life. However, there are signs, but they're mostly visual instead of statistical.

Castro has been belting a lot of singles recently and has 12 hits in his last 11 games. Only four of them have been for extra bases however, two doubles and two homers. But hey, it's got to start somewhere.

But the visual aspects of Castro's at-bats the past two weeks are more encouraging than the numbers. He's not jumping at pitches. He's not behind fastballs or out in front of off-speed and breaking pitches. His balance is better, as he's braced on that front foot with his weight back instead of out over it and reaching with his arms. He's driving some balls the opposite way, indicating he's staying inside pitches far better and using those quick hands that got him here in the first place. We'll need weeks more of it to know it's on the upswing or sure, but at least for now you don't want to hide behind the couch when he's at the plate.

There is a comparison to be drawn for the de- and then reconstruction of Castro and the Cubs are attempting with him. It's Tiger Woods. That's not to say that Castro was as dominating at baseball as Woods was (sadly, not is) at golf or that he will be. But the rebuilding of an already successful game is

a parallel.

After Woods won his first Masters, and completely obliterated everyone while doing it, he still embarked on a massive swing reconstruction that took years to take effect (and has done so twice more since). Though at that young age, Woods had already had truckloads of success, his swing only worked because of the mutant-levels of talent he had. It was all timing and moving parts and really only Woods could get every facet of that swing to lineup consistently, and not always.

Castro was similar. He rocketed through the Cubs system on precocious talent based on see-ball hit-ball. His reflexes and hands were so quick it didn't matter that his approach and swing at times were way off. He could make it work. But like Woods' swing, it was only a matter of time before it was found out at the highest level.

So Castro, or the Cubs, began the reconstruction. The leg-kick isn't as high; there is a calming down of all the other parts. The interim was ugly, with erratic results. But could the end-product be something glorious? We'll have to see, but that amount of talent combined with the right approach and swing...the sky should be the limit.

And if it means that Castro ends up banging Lindsey Vonn one day, so much the better.



Arizona Diamondbacks



Pos	Player	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP	LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	WAR
1B	Paul Goldschmidt	419	112	21	78	9	12.2 %	20.0 %	.349	23.4 %	.309	.392	.550	.942	.402	4.2
CF	Gerardo Parra	419	105	7	27	6	7.9 %	16.0 %	.322	19.6 %	.280	.339	.419	.758	.331	2.8
3B	Martin Prado	399	95	8	36	1	6.8 %	9.5 %	.268	21.6 %	.258	.308	.372	.681	.298	0.0
C	Miguel Montero	365	72	8	33	0	11.0 %	21.6 %	.274	22.3 %	.229	.318	.340	.657	.293	0.7
OF	A.J. Pollock	297	70	6	24	6	5.4 %	18.9 %	.295	17.7 %	.252	.294	.414	.708	.306	2.2
RF	Cody Ross	296	70	5	27	1	7.4 %	15.2 %	.295	22.3 %	.263	.322	.372	.694	.307	0.7
SS	Didi Gregorius	266	65	5	19	0	7.5 %	15.0 %	.309	22.3 %	.273	.338	.399	.738	.322	1.6
2B	Cliff Pennington	225	46	1	15	2	8.0 %	18.2 %	.276	22.1 %	.225	.287	.279	.566	.249	0.1
LF	Jason Kubel	219	46	5	27	0	10.5 %	28.3 %	.318	29.9 %	.237	.315	.356	.671	.294	-0.7
3B	Eric Chavez	161	44	7	29	1	6.2 %	14.9 %	.314	18.4 %	.299	.344	.524	.868	.366	0.5
IF	Aaron Hill	136	33	4	15	1	8.8 %	12.5 %	.287	20.0 %	.273	.346	.455	.800	.347	0.5
OF	Adam Eaton	28	5	0	2	0	10.7 %	21.4 %	.263	5.6 %	.200	.286	.280	.566	.258	-0.1
C	Wil Nieves	75	25	0	12	0	5.3 %	14.7 %	.417	21.7 %	.357	.387	.414	.801	.352	0.3
Team Totals		863	80	378	29	8.1 %	18.5 %	.297	21.5 %	.255	.318	.386	.704	.308	12.0	
Rank in NL		5	12	5	13	4	4	8	4	7	7	10	10	9	7	

Goldschmidt only has two homers in his last 20 games.

Starting Pitchers

Player	GS	IP	W	L	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP	GB/FB	HR/FB	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
Patrick Corbin	19	130.1	11	1	7.53	2.28	0.62	.246	1.44	7.8 %	1.00	2.35	3.17	2.8
Randall Delgado	7	42.2	2	3	6.75	1.90	1.27	.344	1.39	13.6 %	1.41	3.16	4.01	0.5
Wade Miley	20	120.2	6	8	6.64	2.91	1.19	.307	1.81	15.1 %	1.38	4.03	4.34	0.7
Tyler Skaggs	5	29.0	2	1	7.76	3.10	1.24	.282	1.16	12.5 %	1.31	4.03	4.15	0.3
Ian Kennedy	19	114.0	3	7	7.42	3.39	1.26	.295	0.93	11.9 %	1.39	5.29	4.62	0.6
Team Totals	600.0	29	34	6.85	2.74	1.02	.295	1.48	11.9 %	1.31	4.05	4.04	6.5	
Rank in NL	4	12	7	11	7	11	11	5	13	12	11	13	10	

Corbin hasn't faded at all, giving up 12 earned runs in his last six starts. He's also struck out 10 in his last two.

Relievers

Player	G	IP	SV	BS	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP	GB/FB	HR/FB	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
Brad Ziegler	51	45.1	4	0	4.76	2.58	0.40	.237	9.55	18.2 %	1.06	2.38	3.56	0.3
Tony Sipp	42	27.2	0	2	9.76	4.55	0.65	.299	0.36	4.4 %	1.41	3.90	3.56	0.3
David Hernandez	42	43.1	2	5	8.93	2.70	1.66	.248	0.64	14.3 %	1.13	4.36	4.50	-0.2
Heath Bell	41	37.1	15	5	9.40	2.65	1.93	.330	1.15	20.0 %	1.47	4.34	4.63	-0.3
Will Harris	29	24.2	0	0	11.68	2.92	0.36	.339	2.38	7.7 %	1.18	1.82	1.96	0.6
Josh Collmenter	27	54.0	0	0	8.17	3.17	0.83	.245	0.57	6.8 %	1.11	2.83	3.61	0.5
J.J. Putz	22	19.0	5	5	9.47	5.68	1.42	.292	1.87	20.0 %	1.53	3.32	4.89	-0.3
Team Totals	300	299.1	28	19	8.42	3.19	0.99	.281	1.21	11.1 %	1.24	3.19	3.79	1.3
Rank in NL	5	8	4	15	4	7	12	5	11	14	6	4	11	9

Putz's velocity is down for the fourth straight year, but his line-drive rate is down 5% from last year.

On The DL

- Willie Bloomquist - Hand
- Trevor Cahill - Hip
- Daniel Hudson - Elbow
- Brandon McCarthy - Shoulder
- Matt Reynolds - Elbow

DIAMONDBACKS SPOTLIGHT

Randall Delgado: What Could Have Been?



You know the story by now. Theo Epstein and Jed Hoyer had a trade done with the Atlanta Braves for Ryan Dempster. It was settled. Sealed. Delivered. The main piece coming back was Randall Delgado, who was on the cusp of breaking into the Braves rotation -- and went on to make 17 starts for the Braves last year. It looked like the Cubs had their first young pitcher to get excited about in the Theed Rebuild.

Of course, it didn't happen. Dempster freaked out about being woken up from a nap or not going to the Dodgers because the Dodgers didn't want him or nightmares about what Jake Peavy was doing at that exact moment or whatever other bullshit that fucktard could come up with to nix that trade. Needless to say, Epstein and Hoyer were not best pleased; neither were the Braves, and Delgado eventually was shipped out to Arizona in the Justin Upton trade. A deal that's working out quite well for the Braves, in case anyone was wondering.

But how is it working out for the Diamondbacks, and how might it have worked out for the Cubs? Delgado's 2013 has not been pretty. It started in Triple-A after he was unable to win a rotation spot in spring training. He got shelled in the minors this year, with an ERA nearing 6.00 and a walk-rate that was tickling five per nine innings. When injuries ravaged the D-Backs rotation, Delgado got the call, and he actually has been pretty good since, at least for an injury fill-in.

Whereas in the minors this year Delgado was walking everyone, his walk-rate with Arizona is under two per nine innings. His ERA is under 4.00 even while his BABIP is around a very unfair .350. So he's pitching around a lot of hits that normally wouldn't fall in. His ground-ball rate is down from last year in Atlanta, but

not remarkably so. His line-drive rate is just about league average, so all in all he's been decent. At the age of 23, you'll certainly take that with the hope of added growth.

So how did this work out for the Cubs? Well, instead of Randall Delgado, they traded Fucktard to Texas and got Kyle Hendricks instead. It'll be years before we know how this goes, but it's still fun to look.

Hendricks is lighting up Double-A this year. In fact, he's lighting it up much more than Delgado did. His ERA is a run and a half lower than Delgado's full year in Double-A. His WHIP is 1.02, and Delgado's was 1.3. While Hendricks strikes out fewer hitters, his walks are about half of what Delgado's was.

Maybe it has worked out in the end. Maybe the difference in leagues in Double A are a bigger component than we know. Maybe Hendricks's precision-based approach won't translate to the majors the way Delgado's more explosive stuff will. Maybe they'll both suck and never be anything. Maybe Hendricks is going to be part of another trade one day. Who knows?

So even though all our wailing and mocking of Dempster for his antics last season, he may have actually goofed his way into helping out the Cubs more than he would have had he just accepted that trade in the first place. Of course, Hendricks is going to have to actually make it to the majors first, which could come as soon as September.

Let's check back in a year and see how this looks.



Pos	Player	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP	LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	WAR
RF	Hunter Pence	412	101	14	49	14	6.1 %	16.3 %	.285	16.9 %	.263	.308	.451	.759	.327	2.8
C	Buster Posey	379	108	14	59	1	9.5 %	11.3 %	.335	18.6 %	.323	.393	.539	.932	.398	4.3
2B	Marco Scutaro	368	101	2	22	1	8.4 %	6.5 %	.327	20.6 %	.309	.368	.391	.760	.337	2.1
SS	Brandon Crawford	355	86	5	30	1	7.6 %	16.6 %	.313	19.2 %	.269	.331	.381	.712	.309	1.7
3B	Pablo Sandoval	337	83	9	43	0	5.9 %	14.2 %	.289	20.5 %	.269	.318	.401	.719	.313	0.8
1B	Brandon Belt	332	79	10	38	4	9.3 %	23.2 %	.327	22.2 %	.267	.340	.449	.790	.342	1.9
OF	Gregor Blanco	315	77	1	28	10	8.6 %	20.0 %	.341	23.1 %	.270	.333	.358	.691	.306	1.6
OF	Andres Torres	246	58	2	20	3	6.9 %	22.8 %	.329	21.1 %	.259	.306	.362	.668	.292	0.8
Pos	Player	PA	H	HR	RBI	SB	BB%	K%	BABIP	LD%	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS	wOBA	WAR
C	Guillermo Quiroz	77	14	1	5	0	6.5 %	24.7 %	.265	20.0 %	.203	.267	.319	.586	.256	-0.1
IF	Tony Abreu	69	18	1	7	0	5.8 %	23.2 %	.362	22.9 %	.286	.333	.476	.810	.343	0.3
IF	Kensuke Tanaka	29	7	0	1	1	10.3 %	10.3 %	.304	22.7 %	.269	.345	.269	.614	.285	0.0
RF	Jeff Francoeur	10	3	0	1	0	10.0 %	0.0 %	.333	44.4 %	.333	.400	.444	.844	.372	0.2
Team Totals			876	63	362	43	7.2 %	17.3 %	.305	20.4 %	.263	.319	.385	.705	.308	16.5
Rank in NL			3	14	10	11	11	1	3	11	3	6	11	9	10	2

Why do people keep thinking this guy was ever good? Outside his rookie year, he's never had a wOBA over .350, an OBP over .330, and has had a negative WAR three times.

Starting Pitchers

Player	GS	IP	W	L	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP	GB/FB	HR/FB	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
Chad Gaudin	7	40.1	4	0	7.81	2.01	0.67	.239	0.79	6.4 %	0.94	2.23	2.95	0.7
Madison Bumgarner	20	132.0	10	6	8.73	2.52	0.82	.231	1.17	9.4 %	0.96	2.93	3.25	2.1
Tim Lincecum	19	116.1	5	9	9.67	3.71	0.77	.312	1.69	11.8 %	1.33	4.26	3.33	1.4
Barry Zito	19	103.1	4	7	5.84	3.57	0.96	.350	1.05	8.8 %	1.65	4.88	4.41	0.1
Matt Cain	20	117.0	6	6	8.23	3.15	1.23	.258	1.01	12.5 %	1.20	5.00	4.15	0.4
Team Totals	565.2	31	35	8.15	3.15	1.07	.294	1.15	11.6 %	1.30	4.49	3.92	3.8	
Rank in NL	9	10	9	1	12	14	9	15	12	10	13	10	13	

Ok, this can't last. It's Chad Fucking Gaudin.

Relievers

Player	G	IP	SV	BS	K/9	BB/9	HR/9	BABIP	GB/FB	HR/FB	WHIP	ERA	FIP	WAR
Javier Lopez	42	23.2	0	0	9.51	3.42	0.00	.275	3.15	0.0 %	1.18	1.52	2.08	0.5
George Kontos	41	43.0	0	1	8.37	3.35	1.26	.320	0.85	11.5 %	1.44	4.81	4.26	-0.3
Sergio Romo	40	36.2	23	3	9.82	1.72	0.49	.290	0.95	5.1 %	1.04	2.95	2.15	1.1
Jose Mijares	38	33.1	0	0	10.26	2.70	0.81	.357	0.83	7.3 %	1.44	2.43	3.02	0.4
Jean Machi	27	28.0	0	1	7.71	1.61	0.64	.341	1.92	8.3 %	1.29	3.54	2.80	0.3
Santiago Casilla	24	21.1	1	0	6.75	6.33	0.42	.204	1.75	6.3 %	1.27	1.69	4.27	-0.3
Sandy Rosario	22	23.0	0	0	8.22	3.91	0.39	.313	1.89	5.6 %	1.39	2.74	3.09	0.2
Jake Dunning	17	17.1	0	0	6.75	2.60	0.52	.250	3.00	11.1 %	1.04	3.12	3.51	0
Team Totals	315	304.1	24	9	8.19	3.46	0.68	.293	1.46	8.3 %	1.30	3.22	3.47	1.3
Rank in NL	2	7	8	3	6	11	3	7	5	5	9	5	4	11

On The DL

Jeremy Affeldt - Groin
 Joaquin Arias - Appendicitis
 Angel Pagan - Hamstring
 Ryan Vogelsong - Hand

GIANTS SPOTLIGHT

Matt Cain



It's easy to make a joke about how Cain is struggling this year under the weight of his wallet. After all, this is the first year of his five-extension that'll net him \$127 million when it's all said and done (that's \$25 mil do per season, in case you're division-impaired). But it's probably more than that.

Cain has thrown over 200 innings every year since 2007. That's six straight. You can add 20 more innings to that in 2010 for that postseason run, and 30 more from last year's run. That's probably more than 50 innings total as well, because there can't be a higher-stress start than one in the postseason (ask Fucktard Dempster about it, though he only has the one, don't he?)

Maybe it's just exhaustion, and Cain isn't the only going through it at the moment. Justin Verlander had the same streak of 200+ inning seasons coming into this one, and he's seen his ERA balloon to over a run more from last year, as well as his strikeouts go down and his walks go up. C.C. Sabathia had the same streak as well -- though his came with even more innings than the other two -- and his ERA this year is a full run higher than last year, along with the dropping strikeouts and rising walks. Carsten Charles has also piled on 60 more innings in the playoffs in that time.

We can keep going. Roy Halladay took a similar streak into last season, and he had his ERA go up two full runs before going on the shelf that year and this one. At 36, he probably isn't going to be anything ever again. Cole Hamels had a like workload and his ERA is currently over 4.00. Quite simply, pitchers just don't seem to recover from this kind of punishment.

Cain needn't look much farther than his teammate Barry Zito to see what could be in store. Zito had six straight seasons of 200+ innings heading into free agency, along with a couple playoff starts in that time. He signed that huge deal with the

Giants. He hasn't thrown 200 innings or had an ERA under 4.00 since. Yeah. Yikes. Sure the Giants aren't having flashbacks or anything.

When you look at similarity scores for Cain, the name Brandon Webb pops up a lot. Webb had five straight 200+ innings seasons heading into 2009. He hasn't been seen since. That won't make the Giants feel better at all.

Felix Hernandez is another who has piled up the innings along with Cain and is slightly younger. Hernandez's numbers are still great, but his velocity is down and Mariners fans are in panic mode about how long the King can hold down the fort with his lessened stuff.

If Giants fans want to look for encouragement, another name on the similarity score should provide some. That's John Smoltz. Smoltz had five straight 200+ inning seasons until the age of 27 and then got hurt. But he came back to have two more 200+ inning as a starter, with another at 192. He was excellent in those years, with ERAs of 3.18, 2.94, and 3.02. Of course, the next two years he was on and off the DL, and then missed the whole next season before remaking himself as a closer for the next four seasons. But he did manage to go back to starting and piled up three more seasons of 200+ innings.

Cain turns 29 in October, which is looking increasingly like an October he won't have to pitch. How much can the Giants expect of Cain in the last four years of his mega-deal? It would appear to be not much, if all the other parallels are to be believed. Unless he can get on whatever Bartolo Colon is injecting into himself...except not get caught like Colon did last year and is about to this year. Hey, he's in the Bay Area right? Isn't that Ground Zero for all that stuff?

D-Backs Q and A

Tim from AZSnakePit.com is our guest to tell us about what's going down in the desert.

Let's start with Ian Kennedy. Perhaps expectations are always going to get out of whack when you have a 21-4 year and sub-3.00 ERA season on your resume, but what's been up this year?

He's just not throwing very good pitches. The velocity hasn't gone down, which is good, but the pitches don't have the same quality. It's difficult to pin down what exactly is wrong, as there isn't a significant difference in velocity or movement. One problem is giving up big innings, especially at the start of games. It's tough to have a good start when you give up 4 runs in the first 2 innings against the Brewers. I'm feeling his 2011 campaign will end up more the outlier than the norm. He'll probably be a nice 3rd in the rotation kind of pitcher, but the D-backs are hoping he's an ace.

Randall Delgado would have been a Cub had Ryan Dempster not been such a fuckwit. He's filled in the rotation since McCarthy and Cahill went on the DL. What have your impressions of him been?

Mixed to good. He's had problems with walks and home runs before joining the team, and there's been times when he's looked like the young pitcher he is. But he's also cut down on his walks so far and shown strides that he'll be a decent asset. During Spring Training when he was battling Patrick Corbin and Tyler Skaggs, he seemed to be the lowest of the three, and although he might still be, but it's not nearly as much of a gap as previously feared.

According to some metrics, A.J. Pollock is one of the best center fielders in the league. That what you've seen? There's certainly a lot of ground to cover in that park...

He's been pretty sensational on defense, and has made big improvements in hitting. Last year I wasn't particularly impressed by his play, but I like him a lot better this year. Imaging a Parra/Eaton/Pollock outfield would be pretty fun, but that's not going to happen.

Patrick Corbin has been the D-Backs best pitcher, but has already thrown 130 innings in his first full year in the majors. Do they have a cap in mind and will their place in the standings have some effect on it?

I haven't heard any specific numbers on a limit, and given the kind of old school approach Gibson and Kevin Towers bring, I suspect there won't be a cap. I hope there is, because I'd rather see him not get run into the ground.

What might Arizona look to get at via trade?

Right now, because the team has been scuffling so much, it feels like we could use starting pitching, relievers, and offense. We probably won't see a deal for a hitter, simply because the team has already committed to quite a few of the positions. Maybe if we were the Dodgers we could go crazy, but whether we like it or not, the lineup will likely stay the same for the rest of the year.

I have a feeling we'll try to make a deal for a starter, but that's kind of a problem as the best trade chips for Arizona are young pitchers that project pretty high. Maybe we could move a guy like Chris Owings, who is redundant with Didi Gregorius on the 25 man roster, but I don't know if we can run with the big boys to get a top line starter. And frankly, we don't need another 3rd in the rotation, when it seems like the entire rotation outside of Corbin has been mid-level this season.

Headed to October?

I have to be happy that the team is still in position to win the Division, but I feel like the ship is sinking slowly. Unless something changes, whether its personnel, or the players simply improving, the D-backs will be watching the playoffs at home. I feel like its division or bust, and the charging Dodgers make me nervous.

Giants Q and A

Our Giants guy Julian kind of lost his mind during his answers. We present them with no editing or judging. This is literally what he sent back to us.

So there's one over-arching answer to all of the questions below: "WHO FRIGGIN CARES!? Our wildest dreams came true - TWICE. A world championship in my lifetime, a world championship in my six-year-old boy's lifetime... two of them!! Kinda tasteless right? How greedy would we be if we were to expect a competitive team or wring our hands over a disappointing team. Every time I thought, over the past six weeks, that the Giants might never win another game again, I realized that my friends from cities around the country who haven't won a World Series at all, or in decades - in a CENTURY - in one case, would just tell me to blow it out my ass."

And all that being said, we are 4 1/2 games out at the midpoint of the season and gawdamn right I want to get a third ring in four years. Two key pieces of last year's championship team, Angel Pagan and Ryan Vogelsong have been out all season. Wait, did I just write that? Angel Pagan and Ryan Vogelsong were key pieces to a championship team??? And that in a nutshell is the point. Everything about the Giants defies logic and explanation. Last year Pagan and Vogelsong will be this year's Gaudin and Francouer. Gaudin & Francouer - they ought to go into the perfume business. Tagline: "Gaudin & Francouer - For that Saint Tropez vibe"

Some would call all of this humble bragging. Yes, I'm thrilled that the Giants have won a couple World Series. Yes, more would be nice. But I think all associated with the Giants know catching lightning in a bottle twice is impossible enough. Three times - okay, yeah, whatever.

So for the specific answers to your questions:

"What the hell happened?"

Some say two WS extended seasons in a three year period and the pitchers and just run down. I kinda subscribe to this idea. As I alluded to above, there could be a bit of an existential crisis happening too - two championships, a perfect game and a no-hitter thrown in for good measure... are there any mountains left to climb?

"Lincecum coming or going?"

Could depend on what happens in the next week. The Giants could win enough games before the deadline to make the wrong decision. I think he'll stay but we'll pay through the nose (in lost draft picks and cash) and it will probably put the franchise back a year or two in development. But seriously, would anybody want him? Doubt it.

"Cain's problem - not Able to lift arm above shoulder"

Tired. Had a kid recently. Those late night feedings are brutal. He's earned a down year. I'm completely not worried about him. In fact, when I get in a stressful situation, I just mutter "Matt Cain, Matt Cain, Matt Cain." Of all the things I worry about in life or baseball, Matt Cain would be the very last thing.

"Gaudin"

Giants fans have come to expect RumpelSabean to pull this kind of thing out of his ass. There is literally no reason why Gaudin should be good - like there was no reason why Vogelsong, Pagan, Torres, Huff, Ross, Burrell, etc. shouldn't have been good. I love baseball, it's so gaddamn not fair.

"To Trade or Not To Trade"

Again, it's comes down to how the Giants do over the next week. They very well may win enough games to make a bad decision. Teams are asking about our bullpen arms. Yeah, okay maybe we Jose Mijares, Gaudin, Javier Lopez get traded for a 'B' prospect... Maybe Hunter Pence or Sergio Romo are shipped for something a little more fancy. My guess is that nothing happens.

"Sandoval"

Having a bad season. I still want him on my team. He's still got a positive WAR. There's a lot of debate on if the weight really is the issue - I kinda think it is - but you know, a panda can't live on bamboo alone. Oh, wait, yes, it does.

In conclusion:

World Series rings x 2

Perfect game

No-hitter

Posey

Bumgarner

Posey

Posey

Posey

Oh and apparently it is rumored that the Beard is working out in SF as we speak. Delicious.

There...He...Goes....There He Goes Again....

Continued from page 1

B of sorts. As Bob Brenly was so keen on reminding us again and again, baseball is a game of adjustments. Whether those two flattenings at the hands of Anaheim and Pittsburgh were signs that the league was catching on or just bad outings, we can't tell. But at least Samardzija came up with something new to get back on the front foot.

Have You Seen Junior Lake?

Of course, the other story in the Rockies series was the debut of Junior Lake, who wasn't exactly one of the Cubs' prime prospects. But his first three games were a splash to be sure, going 5-for-12 and being everywhere on the map from spectacularly athletic to stripper-on-meth-binge erratic. If there wasn't a screen behind home plate his throw yesterday to try and kneecap Gonzalez at home might have ended up in Colorado Springs. But how upset are you going to get at a guy who until a month or so ago was an infielder?

Lake is a lot like other Jim Hendry signings and picks. The athleticism and skill is way high if not off the charts. Just watching Lake glide back in centerfield for a couple balls this weekend (a position he never really has played), you kind of dream of him streaking down a sideline under one of Jay Cutler's (or if you prefer, Jake Utler's) passes. He's big, fast, and he hasn't come up with the usual Hendry-prospect looping swing.

But his feel for the game is still...nascent, let's say. There was that throw, there were a couple of odd routes to balls, and of course it only took two games before the Rockies fed him a steady diet of breaking balls at the plate. That's only going to continue, for however long he is here. Assuming David DeJesus ever gets healthy again and Nate Schierholtz isn't traded, it might not be for very long.

The strange thing about Lake is that when you look at him, you'd assume there was some power. But he really hasn't shown that in the minors yet. He only managed 10 dingers in Double-A last year and that was a career-high. He had four in 40 games at Triple-A this year and might still be hampered by the hand-injury that caused him to miss the season's first six weeks. Needless to say, if he's going to play the outfield it's something that's going to have to develop. And still might, after all he's still only 23.

Most likely, this last two months could act as something of a showcase of Lake, who is probably more likely to end up as part of a trade than he is to be part of the Cubs future. With Soler, Almora, Bryant, and Baez all having better chances of sticking in the Cubs outfield in the years to come, and Lake's balloon-hands in the infield (he had mostly been a 3rd baseman in the minors, but you can probably guess what the problems were there), he would seem to be without a position. It's hard to project a guy as just a utility-man, because you'd hope for more.

But it's one more thing to track as this season closes up and you can't help but enjoy watching a player with such raw athleticism. Lake can make the game look easy at times, but then again he can make it look incredibly hard, too. But of course, Felix Pie looked like a pure athlete, too. Whoops. Whatever. Check back in this space periodically about Lake.

Get The Catapult

And of course, right before the time we were going to press, the biggest Cubs story that didn't involve bullhorn Tom Tunney finally came to a close, as the Cubs traded Matt Garza to Texas for Mike Olt, Justin Grimm, and C.J. Edwards.

We're sorry to see Garza go, but of course we get it. He had no business being here and the Cubs need to load up on all the assets they could get. Garza will be their biggest chip to cash in for years to come, assuming the Cubs still need to do that after this season. He's going to be insanely expensive this winter, even though he's not really an ace. And if the Cubs want, they could always bring him back.

But Garza cared, and he loved being here, which hasn't always been the case. It's going to be hard to replace him, and there's no one in the system anywhere near ready to step into a #2 starter role. But still, the Cubs got a pretty nice haul for him, or so it appears at first glance.

Olt is the wildcard. He was untouchable for a couple seasons in Texas, but has kind of flattened out. He had some eye problems, and hasn't done anything at the top level yet. But until last year he was a guy with two .500+ slugging seasons in Double-A and high-A, and is still only 24. He's starting to get hot in Triple-A too, as in his last 10 games he's slugging over .700. If he keeps it going, he could be up in August to replace a possibly-departing Luis Valbuena. It was only a year ago that Olt was considered the next big thing, and it's still very possible that's exactly what the Cubs got.

The other players in the deal are not to be sneezed at either. Justin Grimm was forced into the Rangers rotation when pretty much every other pitcher they had ended up on the DL. It looks like he's been rushed. Grimm's first two full years in the Rangers' system saw a precision dart-thrower who had a 1.72 ERA at Double-A. He's struggled since rising from that level, but he's also 24 and if the Cubs let him just let his hair down, they may get a mid-rotation starter as soon as next season.

C.J. Edwards is the firework. He's in his second year in the minors, and is at high-A now, and in both years his k-rate has been over 11 per nine innings. He's a Chris Sale clone, in that you're going to want to rush him a couple Italian beefs to get some weight on him. That's why scouts worry about his durability. But there's no question he's got explosive stuff, and like all Jed and Theo pickups on the mound, he's shown an ability to throw a change-up.

It sounds like the Cubs got three very usable assets for Garza, and you can't ask for much more.

By The Time They Get To Arizona

The journey west continues for the Cubs, with four in Arizona to face the 1st-place-until-the-Dodgers-catch-them Diamondbacks, and then a weekend stay in San Francisco to see the rotting carcass the Giants have become.

Watching the Diamondbacks recently is a lot like watching someone in a pent-house quickly filling with water with no exits present. It's nice that they got time in there and to see how it feels, but this isn't going to end well. The D-Backs are only four games over .500 and the Dodgers -- after an unconscious 20-5 streak -- sit only a half-game back and even in the loss-column.

What happened? Well, Arizona simply wasn't that good but benefitted from everyone else in the division looking like Homer Simpson's sperm sample. They have one starter in Patrick Corbin and that's it. Ian Kennedy has been a dumpster fire for most of the season, and the loss of Brandon McCarthy to yet another catastrophic medical problem (he specializes in them) didn't help -- though McCarthy wasn't very good before getting all seizure-y. Trevor Cahill has been hurt too, though his ERA was 4.66 before doing so. It's led to shoulda-been-Cub Randall Delgado entering the rotation, and he's not been half-bad, giving up eight earned runs in his last four starts over 24 innings, while striking out 19. Sigh.

The D-Backs offense isn't that great either. There's Paul Goldschmidt, who's been a professional ass-kicker for sure at a .942 OPS. But after that? Only geriatric Eric Chavez has a weighted on-base over .350 (and his forearms are even older than he is). There are a lot of defensive specialists here, though they do grind out at-bats pretty well.

As for the San Francisco Giants...woof. They have the Padres to thank for not being in last, and are actually only three games better than the Cubs. What happened? Well, you can't catch lightning in a bottle every year, can you Kenny Williams?

Let's start with the team's strength, which has been the rotation. Madison Bumgarner has been excellent, and then after that the Giants have needed a four-day monsoon. Despite his recent no-hitter (that was more whiskey-dick than it was brilliance, because 148 pitches is a lot of work to get to your climax and everyone was exhausted after it), Tim Lincecum has continued to be muddled in mediocrity. He's not as bad as he was last year, and his FIP is actually a respectable 3.33, so he's been a little unlucky. But his velocity is gone, and his really trying to Maddux-up his game. What the Giants do with him before the deadline or before he hits free agency in the winter ought to be fascinating. Matt Cain's workload of the past three years has caught up to him, as he can't do anything right. His ERA is 5.00, his walks are up, and he's watching a lot more fly balls land in someone's beer this year than he has in the past. But three straight years of throwing over 220 innings in the regular season, with two full postseason runs on top, catches up to a lot of guys. Maybe just a one year blip?

The Giants offense isn't very good, because the thing is it was never very good. But it always got masked by some magical and inexplicable performance from an Aubrey Huff or Juan Uribe or a couple months of Pat Burrell or Marco Scutaro or Angel Pagan. These are not legends and they will eventually revert back to what they always had been. Buster Posey is still a galactic force, and Scutaro is doing his thing where he doesn't miss when he swings. But past that there's just a bunch of singles hitters here and the Giants aren't getting the pitching to cover it up.

Garza Trade Review

Reaction From The Blogosphere

From Cubs Den on The ChicagoNow.com Network

The Cubs definitely improved the quality of his deal here with Justin Grimm. He has a mid-rotation ceiling according to BA with a 91-94 mph fastball, curve, slider, and change up. Others think he's more likely a 4 or 5. He had struggled a bit this year but there was a little bad luck involved (.347 BABIP, 63% strand rate, 14.3% FB/HR rate) and thus his xFIP is a much more respectable 4.25. He has walked just over 3 batters per 9 innings but he's capable of very good command, especially with this fastball. He may need to use his big curveball less, which MLB hitters tend to take more often than minor leaguers.

Mike Olt is a guy the Cubs have long liked for his athleticism, plate discipline, defense, and ability to provide power. He's had some eye issues and that severely affected his play early in the season but seems to have recovered well. Since returning from surgery, Olt has hit .247/.353/.506 with 10 HRs, and a 13.9% walk rate. The biggest problems are strikeouts and Olt has struck out at a rather high 30.4% rate since his return. I think it's a good gamble and he's a good fit to what the Cubs are doing here. He could provide something similar, ironically, to what the Luis Valbuena/Cody Ransom platoon have in that he'll give you good ABs, good defense, and power -- only Olt is a younger cost-controlled player.

CJ Edwards is an intriguing pitcher who has put up phenomenal numbers, going 8-2 with a 1.83 ERA and a whopping 11.76 Ks/9 IP and solid control (3.28 walks/9 IP). Opinion varies as to Edwards long term value. John Sickels had him rated in his midseason top 75 while Professor Parks thinks he's a bottom of the rotation pitcher or reliever. One concern is a very slight build as Edwards is about to turn 22 and still hasn't filled out his ultra-thin frame (6'2", 155 lbs.). That obviously presents durability questions but there is no problem with arm strength. Edwards has been clocked as high as 98 mph and sits 90-94 mph per Baseball America. He's developing a feel for his breaking pitches but Parks said he was impressed with his secondaries to this point.

No word on who the PTBNL is but I don't expect it to be a major prospect but the teams already have determined a pool of players for the Cubs to choose from.

In all, this is a pretty good deal for the Cubs, who get a MLB ready starter, a starting 3B, and a prospect for down the road who could end up in the rotation or a useful, hard-throwing reliever. Not a bad haul for 2 months of a pitcher the Cubs seemingly were unable to re-sign at their terms.

The Cubs have young cost-controlled starters Jeff Samardzija, Travis Wood, Jake Arrieta and Justin Grimm to go with recent FA signing Edwin Jackson, who is under contract for 3 more years. It has the makings of a good rotation with Edwin Jackson the oldest in the group at 29 (turns 30 in September). - *John Arguello*

ObstructedView.net

Mike Olt is the center piece of the trade. He was ranked the 22nd best prospect in baseball by both Baseball America and MLB.com. Olt has struggled a bit this season in AAA, but that's been largely because of some issues he's had with his eyes. That appears to be fixed now and since returning from the DL, he's been every bit as good as he once was.

Olt was listed at 6-2, 210 pounds entering the season. He was born on August 27, 1988 and plays 3rd base.

Olt draws a lot of walks. He has ranged anywhere between 11.8% to 16.4% in his minor league career. He also strikes out quite a bit. That strike out rate has ranged 24.0% and 33.3%. The 33.3% is this season and can be explained by the eye problems.

Olt hits for a lot of power. His ISO has always been in the .200s or higher.

As a 3rd baseman, it creates an interesting situation in Chicago. Or rather, a potentially interesting one. It won't be long before we see Olt in Chicago and if everything goes according to plan (it never does in baseball), Javier Baez could join him and Starlin Castro in Chicago by the end of next season.

One of them will have to move to a new position.

Below is Mike Olt's scouting report from earlier this year by Baseball America.

With plus raw power and strong hitting approach, Olt is a threat to go deep anytime he steps to the plate. He works deep counts and piles up both walks and strikeouts, so his average will settle in the .260-.270 range. Pitchers have had success exploiting the length in his swing by attacking him with high fastballs, and he continues to work to identify and stay back on breaking balls. Scouts say Olt is a joy to watch defensively, owing to his agility and ability to make throws from any angle. He's a well below-average runner.

Like Profar, Olt has advanced rapidly thanks to his tools, work ethic and mental toughness. He's blocked in Texas by Adrian Beltre, so a shift to first base or an outfield corner could be in the works. A potential all-star, he could open 2013 in the big league lineup or get a couple of months in Triple-A.

He won't be blocked in Chicago.

The Cubs farm system was stacked before this trade and it's even more so now. Theo Epstein, Jed Hoyer and company have done a superb job rebuilding this system in less than two years.

The Cubs' Record When...

At home	22-26	Rizzo homers	9-4	Playing on a Saturday	7-9
On road	21-27	Castro homers	4-2	Playing on a Sunday	6-10
Samardzija starts	9-10	DeJesus homers	3-3	Fuckwad sings the stretch	22-26
Jackson starts	7-12	SHAKE HANDS WITH BEEF!	0-2	Wind blows in	12-16
Garza starts	8-3	Soriano homers	9-4	Wind blows out	9-9
Wood starts	7-12	Schierholtz homers and we care a lot!	5-5	In 1-run games	11-21
Villanueva starts	3-8	Samardzija homers	1-0	In 2-run games	11-6
Some jamoke starts	0-1	Drawing no walks	1-6	In 3+-run games	21-25
Starter goes 7+	20-10	Drawing 1-3 walks	27-32	Vs. Right-Handed Starters	30-37
Starter goes 5-7 innings	21-37	Drawing four or more walks	14-15	Vs. Left-Handed Starters	13-16
Starter goes less than 5 innings	2-5	Committing no errors	19-22	Ronnie Woo should be put down	22-26
Use two or less relievers	19-18	Committing one error	18-20	Len Kasper mentions cool band	1-2
Use three relievers	13-20	Committing two errors or more	2-8	Len Kasper mentions terrible band	2-4
Use four or more relievers	11-15	Castro threatens child's life with throw	3-2	Moreland mispronounces "Starlin"	43-53
Getting more than seven hits	33-27	Garza critically injures child with throw	1-0	In April	10-16
Getting seven hits or less	10-26	Playing during the day	22-26	In May	13-14
Hitting no home runs	5-14	Playing at night	21-27	In June	12-15
Hitting one home run	18-22	Playing on a Monday	6-4	In July	8-8
Hitting two home runs	13-8	Playing on a Tuesday	5-8	In August	0-0
Hitting three homers or more	5-1	Playing on a Wednesday	7-7	In September	0-0
Hitting one triple or more	5-2	Playing on a Thursday	7-5	Wearing 3rd jerseys	8-15
In extra innings	6-3	Playing on a Friday	6-10	Fan passes out in bleachers	22-26



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