The Indians embark on the World Series Revenge Tour tonight, as they begin a three game set with the Florida Marlins before coming back home for three with the Atlanta Braves. Coming off one of the most surprising seasons in recent memory in 2006, the Marlins are still finding ways to hang around the .500 mark in 2007. The Marlins are winning on the strength of a young lineup that is leading the National League in runs scored, doubles, and triples. Cris Sykes previews the series for us.

Anyone want to do some fishing for a few days in South Florida? The Cleveland Indians will travel down to Florida, to take on the Marlin Kiddie Corp for a three game series that will begin the World Series Revenge Tour, 2007.

Coming off one of the most surprising seasons in recent memory in 2006, the Marlins are still finding ways to hang around the .500 mark in 2007. The Marlins are winning on the strength of a young lineup that is leading the National League in runs scored, doubles, and triples.

The problem for the Marlins comes when you talk about getting the other team out. The only teams with fewer quality starts in Major League Baseball are Washington and Texas. Those are not two teams you want your pitching staff compared with. When they do get a quality start, there is a decent chance their bullpen blows it, as they are 25th in baseball in save percentage.

Tuesday, June 12th, 7:05 PM

Fausto Carmona (7-1, 3.11 Earned Run Average) vs. Scott Olsen (4-5, 5.27 ERA)

I have begun to run out of superlatives to describe Carmona. He has now shown the ability to bounce back from a tough start, rebounding from a 10 hit, five run performance to a seven inning, one run performance. He has now won seven consecutive decisions on the year. I don't know if there has ever been a pitcher to lose as many decisions in a row, and follow it up with a seven game winning streak before. Maybe we need to add a researcher on to the staff of The Cleveland Fan. Maybe I am supposed to research these things myself. Little help Rich?

The Indians will be facing left-handed starter Scott Olsen in game one. Scott Olsen does not pitch deep into games very often, as he has only pitched more than six innings three times in 13 starts.

Olsen also does not seem to care if you hit from the right side or the left side he gives up hits equally. Right-handed batters are hitting .284 and lefties are at .290. He does give up home runs at a lower rate to the lefties (one in every 34 at bats versus LH, one every 26 AB's versus RH).

From the department of no crap Sherlock, Olsen is a totally different pitcher ahead in the count than he is when behind. Opponents are hitting .184 when Olsen is ahead in the count and .400 when he is behind. When the count is even, Olsen struggles as well, allowing a .367 average. In a bit of an oddity, Olsen has not allowed a hit on a three and two count all year. In 28 plate appearances with a full count, Olsen has walked 14 and retired 14.

Wednesday, June 13th, 7:05 PM

Cliff Lee (2-4, 6.31 ERA) vs. Byung-Hyun Kim (3-2, 5.74 ERA)

It has been awhile since I could type these words, but Cliff Lee pitched almost good enough to nearly not lose in his last start. Lee went six innings and only allowed four earned runs. Considering he was starting in that bandbox in Cincinnati, he wasn't all that bad. Only 2 of the home runs he allowed would have left Yellowstone.

Lee will be making his second career start against the Marlins on Thursday. The first start came in 2005 and Lee allowed two earned runs in six innings. It is unfortunate that start means nothing, because none of these Marlins were Marlins in 2005.

Opposing Lee will be Byung-Hyun Kim for the Marlins. Kim has been a little bit of a savior for Florida, up until his last start anyway. Since being acquired from Colorado and placed into the Marlins rotation, Kim has made five starts, winning two of them without losing any. The zero losses is only because his offense bailed him out of a serious hole last time out, making up for him allowing seven earned runs in two and two thirds innings.

You will get an idea of which Kim you will be facing real quick. When he throws strikes he is as tough to hit as any starter the Marlins have. When he is wild, it gets ugly and it gets ugly really fast. Three times Kim has struck out more than he has walked. In those three starts, he has allowed three earned runs in 17 1/3 innings. In his other two starts, he has walked more than he struck out and given up 10 earned runs in eight innings.

Thursday, June 14th, 7:05 PM

Cleveland Undecided vs. Dontrelle Willis (7-5, 4.74 ERA)

Cleveland has decided to go with Undecided to start this game, over Jeremy Sowers. Which is a nice change, because the only thing undecided about a Jeremy Sowers start this year was who

would hit the farthest home run.

The most likely candidate to make this start for the Indians is Jason Stanford. Stanford was once a very promising prospect for the Indians, before a rash of arm injuries slowed him down. Stanford started 10 games for the Indians in 2003 and 2004. Stanford pitched well in those 10 starts, even though he took four losses and only recorded one win, and held a 3.10 ERA.

Squaring off against the Indians lineup will be Dontrelle Willis. Willis is a good starting pitcher, but he has never really taken that leap to stardom so many expected after he burst onto the scene in 2003.

One thing you can say about Willis, he is consistent. He has pitched either six or seven innings in every start this year, but one. He also gives up two, three or four runs in each start, except two.

After starting the season with five wins in his first six starts, the D-Train has derailed and he has now only won two of his last eight, while losing four.

Willis made a start against the Indians back in 2004, getting a no decision by allowing one earned run and three runs overall in five innings of work.

Marlins Lineup

This might sound like a commercial for the PGA Tour, but these guys are good. They are led by their All-Everything

shortstop, Hanley Ramirez. Ramirez is ninth in the NL in batting average, second in stolen bases, first in runs scored and 16th in OPS.

Joinning Ramirez in the middle infield will be Dan Uggla, who is second in runs, and eighth in home runs in the National League. Uggla was one of three Marlins to finish in the top four of the National League Rookie of the Year voting in 2006, finishing behind Hanley Ramirez and Josh Johnson.

Third baseman Miguel Cabrera is about as solid of a hitter as there is. If they could keep him away from the buffet table, he could be well on his way ot a Hall of fame career. He is currently third in average, sixth in home runs, fourth in RBI, and third in OPS in the NL.

If that is not enough, the best infield in baseball is finished off with Aaron Boone at first base. Boone is filling in for the injured Mike Jacobs and doing a pretty solid

job, believe it or not. In 58 games for the fish, Boone is hitting .271 with five home runs and 24 RBI.

Marlins Bullpen

I can tell you one thing; when a Marlin reliever enters a game they are probably going to throw the ball real hard. Of course, they rarely have any clue where it is headed.

Kevin Gregg is currently anchoring the bullpen and

closing games for Florida. Gregg will enter the series with nine saves, having yet to blow a save. Gregg will put a base runner on in most innings, but he will also punch out a hitter and is averaging a strike out per inning.

The Marlins recently acquired Armando Benetiz to help in

their bullpen and he has pitched effectively since coming over. In six innings of work, Benetiz has only allowed four hits and one run.

Florida does go with two left-handers in their pen, Taylor Tankersly and Renyel Pinto. Tankersly has long

been rumored to have closer stuff, but has really struggled with health and command issues in his brief MLB career. Pinto comes into the series allowing runs in his last three appearances, being charged with blown saves in two of them.

Up Next: World Series Revenge Tour Finishes

versus Atlanta