The Cleveland Indians will welcome the Philadelphia Phillies to Jacobs Field for a three game series beginning tonight. Former Tribe skipper Charlie Manuel manages the Phillies, who are 36-33 and winners of six of their last 10 games. Cris Sykes previews the pitching matchups for all three games of the series and breaks down the Phillie lineup and bullpen for us in his series preview.

The Cleveland Indians will welcome the Philadelphia Phillies to Jacobs Field for a three game series beginning tonight. Former Tribe skipper Charlie Manuel manages the Phillies, who are 36-33 and winners of six of their last 10 games.

There are not many opportunities in one's life to see such a significant managerial match up. When Charlie Manuel and Eric Wedge get locked into a battle of wits at some point in this series, you will want to have your Tivo set and ready to record. The combined managerial knowledge held between these two is enough to take any team to a league title. That is, as long as it is a Little League team we are talking about.

If there is one thing to be happy about, this series is in Cleveland, so the double-switch should not be needed. That would add about 13 minutes to the game with these two.

# Monday, June 18, 2007, 7:05 PM

# Cliff Lee (3-4, 6.04 ERA) vs. Cole Hamels (9-2, 3.47 ERA)

Cliff Lee gets to start the opener of the series on Monday evening. Cliff has pitched a little better of late, which is not exactly hard to do. Lee's biggest issue thus far has been walks. Actually the biggest problem is he usually follows a walk with another hit, then a home run.

Lee managed to stop his string of not winning last time out when he beat the Florida Marlins. Lee held the Fish to three runs in five innings to record his first victory in nearly a month. It was the third time in nine starts that Lee managed to keep the ball in the park and he set a season high on strikeouts with six. National League Baseball, fantastic!

The Phillies will counter with Cole Hamels, so Cliff Lee will have to be sharp. Hamels is a strike out machine with 104 in 98 innings, good for third in the Majors and the NL lead.

If there is a chink in the Cole Hamels armor, it is the home run ball. Nearly half of the runs Hamels has allowed this year have been by the guy hitting the home run, he has given up 36 earned runs and 16 home runs. In his last three starts, he has allowed seven earned runs and six home runs. So he does do a good job of limiting the home runs to solo shots.

# Tuesday, June 19, 2007, 7:05 PM

# Jason Stanford (1-0, 1.50 ERA) vs. Kyle Kendrick (0-0, 4.50 ERA)

Game two of the series will feature a couple of guys making their second starts of the 2007 season.

The Indians will send left-hander Jason Stanford to the mound. Stanford was terrific in his first start, limiting the Marlins to one run in six innings. He allowed six hits, did not walk a batter and struck out seven in his first big league start since 2004.

Stanford could be pitching for a spot with the Indians, who will have to make a roster move at the end of the week for the activation of Jake Westbrook. Conventional wisdom has the Indians trying to trade Stanford or put him in the bullpen as the long man. There are some other possibilities as well, but needless to say, the better Stanford can pitch Tuesday, the better the outcome should be for him later in the week.

Kyle Kendrick will be making his second career start in for Philadelphia. He received a no decision in his first start, holding the Chicago White Sox to three earned runs in five innings of work. I am not trying to imply that is a feat of great skill, with the current stats of the White Sox offense.

Kendrick is a ground ball pitcher, getting 11 of his 15 outs on the ground. He also struck out four and held the White Sox without a home run. The left-handed hitters of Chicago managed to get four hits in 13 at bats and Kendrick held the righties to two hits in nine at bats. Small sample size be damned, this guy is vulnerable to left-handed bats. We have left-handed bats!

# Wednesday, June 20,2007, 7:05 PM

# C.C. Sabathia (9-2, 3.19 ERA) vs. Jon Lieber (3-5, 4.21 ERA)

C.C. Sabathia will start game three of the series, taking his third shot at becoming a 10 game winner. In his first start looking for his 10th win, Sabathia pitched nine shutout innings, but got a no decision when the Indians could not score a run in support of him. The second start, Sabathia had win number 10 all lined up after eight solid innings. Unfortunately, Manager Eric Wedge allowed him to go back out to finish things off for himself and Sabathia allowed

two runs in the ninth.

That is the only blip on C.C.'s radar though. He is still first in the American League in innings pitched, fourth in strikeouts, and tenth in ERA. If he can stay healthy and the Indians can remain in contention Sabathia will be in the Cy Young conversation for the rest of this year.

Jon Lieber will oppose Sabathia for the Phillies on Wednesday. I wish I knew which Lieber was going to show up.

Lieber managed to sandwich a complete game three hit shutout between a pair of five inning stinkers over his last three starts.

In the bread of that sandwich, Leiber allowed six and five earned runs in those five innings of work.

Lieber started the season pitching out of the bullpen for the Phillies, before Charlie Manuel decided he would be better off with the ace of his rotation going to the pen instead and inserting

Lieber into the rotation. Lieber has rewarded Manuel with inconsistency rivaled only by the weather in Cleveland.

## Phillies Lineup

The Phillies will enter the series ranked fourth in MLB with 352 runs scored, tied for fourth in home runs tied for third in stolen bases.

The catalyst for the Phillie attack is shortstop Jimmy Rollins. Rollins got off to a hot start, cooled down for a couple of weeks, but has picked it back up

of late. The timing of the cold streak coincided with another move by Charlie Manuel, removing Rollins from his customary spot at the top of the order, to hitting third. Rollins is hitting .278, with 13 home runs, 53 runs scored, 43 runs batted in and 13 stolen bases.

The reason Manuel needed to move Rollins to the third spot in the order was they were missing

defending NL MVP Ryan Howard for a stretch. Howard had gotten off to a miserable start, but since returning from the disabled list, has at least found his power stroke. Howard leads the Phils with 14 home runs, but is only batting .232 on the season. It appears living up to the MVP is harder than winning it for Howard.

The Phillies best offensive

weapon is second basemen Chase Utley. Utley is second on the team in batting average (.320) third in home runs (12) second in runs scored (49) and leads them in RBI (54). Throw in his thirty doubles, and Utley is in the top five in the NL with a .969 OPS

.

The Phillies also have Aaron Rowand and Shane Victarino in

their lineup. They do all of the little things for Philadelphia and I would get more in depth on them if they hadn't just spent the last week killing me in my fantasy baseball league.

## Phillies Bullpen

U-G-L-Y, you ain't got no alibi, you ugly.

The Phillies closer was Tom Gordon, but shoulder

inflammation landed him on the disabled list a long time ago. This prompted Charlie Manuel to move his ace, Brett Myers into the bullpen and the closers role, before he went on the disabled list with shoulder inflammation and send my fantasy team into a tailspin.

Since then, they have allowed Antonio “12 Finger” Alfonseca to close games, and he has been pretty OK at it. Ryan Madson has been their most effective reliever so far in 2007, but he lacks the proper photos of Charlie Manuel to get a shot at closing games.

# Up Next: @ The

# Nation’s Capital