What happens when the stoppable force meets the movable object? We'll find out tonight. Someone has to win this game. All kidding aside, these are a couple huge games for the Indians today and tomorrow when the Motor City Kitties visit the Jake, with a two game lead in the Central on the line if either squad can come away with a sweep. Cris Sykes previews the series for us.

And down the stretch they come...

If this actually was a horse race, there is a pretty good chance both teams would have been euthanized about a week and a half ago to be put out of their misery. Since killing human beings isn't exactly legit in the United States, both teams get 44 more chances to stake a claim to the Central Division title in the American League.

Since the all-star break, the Cleveland Indians are 13-17 and have yet to win more than two consecutive games. Once the best home team in baseball in the first half, they have only managed six wins at Jacobs Field in their last 19 contests. Maybe it is time for the players to quit crying about what team is represented in the stands, and give the home fans that are there a reason to

cheer.

Somehow, the Indians have managed to gain ground on the Detroit Tigers over this terrible stretch of baseball. They have made up the half of a game deficit they faced at the break and are now in a dead heat for the division title. The Tigers actually extended their lead out to two full games as of July 19th, on the heels of a modest four game winning streak. Then the wheels really fell off and they have gone 8-17 since.

Hey Tribe fans, sometimes it is better to be lucky than good.

As bad as both teams have been, the one that finishes the season off will not even think about this last month again. The one that comes up short will spend a long winter thinking about all of the "could haves, should haves and would haves" that come along during a 162 game schedule.

Tuesday August 14th, 7:05 PM

C.C. Sabathia (14-6, 3.52 Earned Run Average) vs. Jeremy Bonderman (10-5, 4.85 ERA)

I am pretty sure Carsten Charles is going to pitch quite well in game one of this series. I just don't know if that means he will win.

This is starting to feel a little redundant on my part, but what else can really be said? Sabathia has stepped into his role as staff ace this year, and should be the front-runner for the AL Cy Young Award. He should be entering this start with at least 17 wins. He has taken a loss or no decision in games he allowed the following earned runs/innings: 3/7, 1/5, 0/9, 1/7, 1/7.66, and 2/7. If he wins half of those games he is 17-4 today. And we thought the offense was good enough this year.

The Indians are 17-8 in games started by Sabathia this year, but have only won two of his last seven starts. The only one of those starts Sabathia pitched poorly enough to lose was his final start before the all-star break. He allowed seven runs on 10 hits, including three home runs and only managed three strikeouts in his four innings of work. Did I mention that was the last time Sabathia faced Detroit?

Tuesday will be the fourth time C.C. faces the Tigers this year. He won his first two starts, pitching before losing that last one. He has gotten progressively worse each time against them, but how much worse can he get than the last one? Damn, I probably shouldn't ask that! In start number one Sabathia allowed three earned runs in seven innings. Start number two it went up to five earned runs in seven and one third innings. Start number three is above, and if I learned anything about progressions in math class, nine runs is on the schedule for Carsten.

Sabathia is 12-8 in 23 career starts against Detroit, with a 4.47 ERA. At Jacobs Field though, he is only 5-6 with a 5.13 ERA. Maybe that nine spot is a possibility.

Jeremy Bonderman is dead in the middle of the Tiger's recent struggles. Before making a start on July 19th, Bonderman had won 10 of 11 decisions and had a 3.53 ERA. In his subsequent four starts, he has lost them all while allowing 28 earned runs in 22 1/3 innings.

Bonderman will be looking to right the ship on Tuesday, in his second start against the Indians this year. On June 3rd, he had the good fortune of matching up with Jeremy Sowers. After allowing a two run home run to Victor Martinez in the first inning, Bonderman settled down and held the Indians without a hit over the second through sixth innings. A couple of hits in the seventh sent Bonderman to the showers, but the Tiger bullpen held down the fort, giving Bonderman his fifth win on the year.

That accounts for one of Bonderman's better starts against the Indians in his career. Overall, he is seven and nine with an ERA over six in 19 career

starts. In 11 starts at Jacobs Field, Bonderman is six and five with a 5.08 ERA.

Wednesday August 15th, 7:05 PM

Fausto Carmona (13-7, 3.26 ERA) vs. Jair Jurrjens (MLB Debut)

What was that Fausto? Four runs? You don't allow four runs in a single start.

Actually you do, about once a month anyway. That is just the fourth time this year that Carmona allowed more than three runs in a start, so maybe we will cut him a little bit of

slack. For now.

Carmona will be making his third start of 2007 against the Detroit Tigers. He faced them in consecutive starts on May 27 and July 1. In the May start, Carmona limited the Tigers to three runs in seven innings of work. He did allow nine hits, but the ground ball pitcher was able to dance around them to record the victory over since departed Mike Maroth.

The June 1 start did not go as well. This time, the Tigers collected 10 hits in only six innings included a two run homer by Craig Monroe that effectively ended Fausto's chance at getting the victory. Tom Mastny helped, when he came in for "relief" and walked two, gave up three hits, allowed four runs and was only capable of recording one out. Fortunately for

Tribe fans, this was the funnest game of the year as it turned out, because we got to play kick the closer and torched Todd Jones for five runs in the ninth inning of the 12-11 win.

Jair Jurrjens, who hails from Curacao, Netherlands, will be making his major league debut on Wednesday. In four and a half seasons in the minors, Jurrjens has amassed a 35-22 record while starting 84 games and posting a 3.21 ERA. He has averaged over seven strikeouts per nine innings throughout his minor league career, but has also allowed two and a half walks per nine innings. He gets a few extra ground ball outs that fly ball outs in the minors, as grounders account for 54% of his outs in the minors.

Scoreboard Watching:

It doesn't really matter; the only score we need to watch is in our series.

Yankees vs. Baltimore

Seattle vs. Minnesota

Boston vs. Tampa Bay

LAAAAA @ Toronto

Up Next: Indians travel to Tampa Bay to battle those pesky Devil Rays.