Paul Cousineau has very vocally voiced his frustration at the Indians refusal to give Matt LaPorta at bats over the course of the last two months. Looks like LaPorta was frustrated too. His 6th inning two run double and 7th inning sac fly led the Tribe offense in their 11-3 win over the Angels last night. To celebrate LaPorta's return, Paulie C chucks some tomahawks at our readers in his latest column for us.

The dog days have descended upon us (or have they been here for about two months now) and the baseball season is starting down the back stretch for all 30 MLB teams. In Cleveland, 2009 is grinding (pun intended) to a slow, painful halt as the Indians finally start to look like they should have about two months ago .

And with that, release the 'hawks:

_____

Hold on, this can't be right...the long-awaited and inexplicably-delayed has finally happened - Matt LaPorta has been called up to join the Tribe? Posting an OPS of .917 in AAA, playing two of the positions among the weakest on the parent club finally proved to be enough to see LaPorta in Cleveland with one full week left in August?

Now...we do the Dance of Joy .

But before we all get too excited, here's a quick reminder on how frequently LaPorta was played in his 24 game stint in May - 12 starts rendering 49 plate appearances. Again, as a quick reminder, the three players who prevented

LaPorta from playing everyday at either 1B, LF, or DH have now ALL found themselves completely out of the organization a mere two months later. To grind (pun intended) salt into that wound, consider that those same players "blocking" LaPorta from playing every single day (as the Indians' top prospect and the bounty for CC) in May are now either playing part-time for NL teams or are out of baseball altogether.

Why is it necessary to dredge up this nonsense?

Here's what Castro wrote regarding Wedge's comments on LaPorta :

Matt LaPorta will see "regular time" in the outfield and at first base, according to Eric Wedge. Where LaPorta's future ultimately lies is still a matter of mystery, as both left field and first base appear wide open for the outset of 2010.

"Regular time" doesn't look quite like "every day, without fail at some position" which is the exact phrasing that Wedge should have used.

Why should it have been used?

Because the Indians' credibility and consistency in this matter is beyond untenable, as AC summarizes :

Wedge said the Indians had planned to get LaPorta up here before September, regardless of Crowe's injury, because pre-September at-bats are considered more meaningful than September at-bats. That's all well and good, but it's Aug. 19. I'm not sure when this pre-September promotion was going to take place, but clearly those meaningful at-bats would have been in short supply.

Is this complaining about a few hundred AB for a player that will (hopefully) see plenty of them in an Indians' uniform?

Probably, but LaPorta (who will wear #7 now, by the by, so break out the duct tape for the back of those Lofton jerseys) should have been called up to play every day the first time he was on the club and the promotion of Gimenez, Crowe, and Marte to all essentially play LaPorta's positions were nothing short of a continuation of the absurdity that has arisen from the whole situation.

Speaking of absurdity, wasn't one of the two given reasons as to why LaPorta wasn't up here when Francisco was traded because Grady needed a back-up in CF and Crowe was that back-up?

Who got DL'd again to create a roster spot for LaPorta...oh, that' right, the back-up CF whose presence on the roster allegedly debunked the idea that The GateKeeper
(scroll down in the link for the explanation) would be better served in Cleveland than in Columbus.

Has the handling of one player (much less a top prospect) been butchered more completely than this whole LaPorta thing?

Doesn't it feel like the microcosm of a season in which either the Indians Front Office and Coaching Staff simply aren't on the same page or are asleep at the wheel on this stuff?

Regardless, there are 43 games remaining on the Indians schedule and we'll soon find out if "regular" playing time means 21 to 22 games, 32 to 33 games, or the whole shooting match. It also bears mentioning that just 11 of those 43 remaining games will come with those aforementioned "more meaningful pre-September" at-bats being even available for LaPorta.

And the wheel of confusion spins on...

_____

How confusing has that wheel been?

Consider that Luis Valbuena was called up to Cleveland on the same day as LaPorta and started only 8 of the first 16 games for the Indians, as he sat on the bench with LaPorta without regular playing time.

Then something happened that may or may not have affected his playing time...remember that collision at Home Plate with Miguel Olivo on May 19th ? Since that game, Louie VB has started 56 of the 77 games they've played despite

posting a .681 OPS for the first month of that stretch. He was struggling for sure, but he has now seemingly made the necessary adjustments to being a regular in MLB and since July 11th has now posted an OPS of .851 with 12 extra-base hits in the 23 games he's started in that stretch.

Did something change in the mind of the manager with that collision that resulted in Valbuena's chin receiving two stitches?

We may never know, though it would seem that Carroll, the logical player to take time away from Valbuena at 2B after Cabrera made the switch, has been more productive than most on the Indians and certainly could have been used as a reason to send Valbuena back down for more "seasoning" to "earn" a trip back to Cleveland.

For whatever reason though, Carroll remained in the Utility role while Valbuena emerged as a legitimately exciting 23-year-old who has out-OPSed the reigning AL MVP since the All-Star Break . Valbuena rewarded the Indians for their unique patience and now has more extra-base hits than Trevor Crowe, Chris Gimenez, Andy Marte, and Wyatt Toregas combined since the All-Star Break.

Why did he stay and LaPorta did not when the Indians' season was in jeopardy of circling the drain, then as the season sank deeper and deeper into the depths of the chasm that the Indians now find themselves?

It's a question that will hopefully find an answer in Wedge's exit interview...as in "exit" from his managerial post.

_____

I'm no expert in resume writing, but can somebody please tell Jamey Carroll to update his to include the fact that he's now currently 15th in the AL in OBP among players with 200 or more plate appearances?

Oh...and putting that he has played 6 of the 9 positions on the diamond would help to.

Last thing...tell him to include a wallet picture of him with it.

I mean, how could a team NOT want this "Little Engine That Could" for the stretch run?

_____

Finally, while taking pleasure in the misfortune of others is not a regular practice of mine, watching the Indians' roster turnover continue and reach biblical proportions, consider this from Rany Jazayerli on the Royals , only team below our moribund Indians in the standing, and their season to date:

... The Royals are 46-72, chugging towards the worst record in baseball, and we can't even point to all the rookies on the roster as both an excuse for that performance and a hope that the performance will improve in the future. Consider this: it's August 18th, and NOT ONE ROYAL HAS MADE HIS MAJOR LEAGUE DEBUT THIS SEASON. That's a stat you might expect from a contending team with a huge payroll and stars at every position. That's not something you expect from a last-place team that is supposedly building for the future.

I guess The Process - I capitalize it out of respect - involves not just losing, but losing with a bunch of veterans while keeping promising minor leaguers like Kila Ka'aihue and Chris Hayes right where they are. Unless The Process includes "purposely tanking this season to get first dibs on Bryce Harper", color me confused.

Let's hope that which Jazayerli adroitly describes as "losing with a bunch of veterans while keeping promising minor leaguers...right where they are" is a practice that has found its end at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario.

If you're wondering, the Indians have seven players (Crowe, Gimenez, LaPorta, Toregas, Huff, Sipp, and Todd) who have made their MLB debut in 2009 (with more likely to come, the most notable being Carrasco and/or Rondon) and while that doesn't mean that those seven players are all significant pieces to the puzzle being constructed, it at least means that the Indians can start the evaluation process now instead of at a date to be determined.

For one in particular (and the one of those seven on the list who is most highly regarded), it's an evaluation process that should be about 200 AB in...