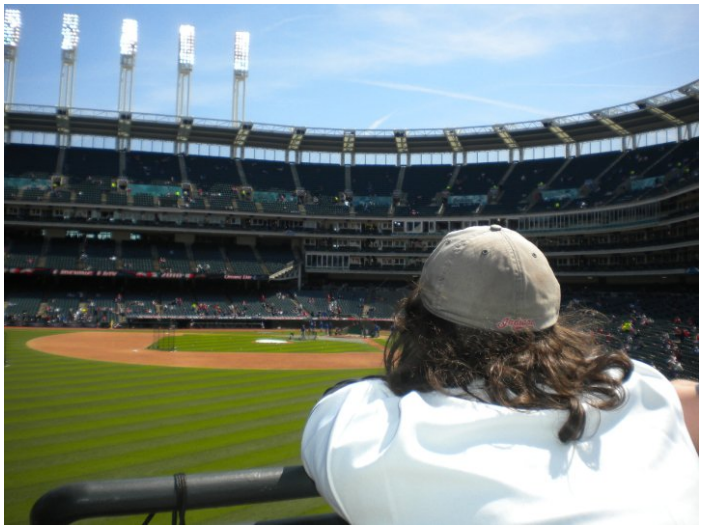

There’s no place I’d rather be to watch a game than the Home Run Porch. As I’ve outlined before, it’s the closest place to perfection for me. There are no vendors in my way. I don’t have to get up to allow a six-year-old, with a bladder the size of a thimble, and his just-as-annoyed father to make their fifth bathroom run by the end of the fourth inning. I, usually, don’t have to hear stupid, irrelevant conversations from teenagers laughing entirely too loudly about stuff that happened in the halls at school. I’m not subjected to listening to some guy complain about his job to his wife who already has to hear it before they go to bed at night.

However, as with most good things, there is one fundamental flaw that prevents the Home Run Porch from being pure bliss. Hecklers. People with no athletic talent who feel the need to hurl unfunny insults at wealthy ballplayers with wives hotter than any girl that they’ve ever slept with. Either that or the ex-athlete who thinks he can use his days playing for a rec center as justification for criticizing a player’s last at bat or play in the field.

The only reason I can’t stand hecklers is because most of them are morons. On the best of nights, I’ll encounter the guy who is able to string together a cogent, hilarious remark. On the greatest of nights, the player will acknowledge the humor and give some kind of signal. I don’t remember what was said, but one of the best instances of this was when Vernon Wells gave the finger to a guy inside his glove.

I have heard my share of tremendous hecklers. However, like people in general, the good ones are few and far between. I can’t help but cringe when some guy begins yelling about how he slept with so-and-so’s sister or mother. Guys who endlessly bug the outfielder about playing closer to the line or that “It’s coming to you, Smith! Better back up!”. Normally, these losers are egged on by their friends who find this one-sided banter to be the most uproariously hilarious

thing that they've ever heard.

This isn't to say that I'm no fun. I just like well thought out humor. In the same way that I loved George Carlin, am a big fan of Robin Williams's stand-up, and laugh at a high-quality heckle, I can't stand Larry The Cable Guy, don't remotely chuckle at fart jokes and don't find it amusing when a guy falsely informs the left fielder that his shoe's untied. For Christ sake, man, if you're going to waste the oxygen it takes to inhale, yell, and then breathe again, make it worth everyone's while.

It takes a special talent to be a good heckler. Though I consider myself to be witty and clever, I don't possess what it takes. I don't have the projection in my voice nor do I have the ability to be clear and concise with what I'm yelling. For me, one the qualifications of being a good heckler is to be informed. Your jeers may go right over the heads of most people on the Porch, but if Delmon Young is in left field and someone yells "I bet your accountant finds fewer tax exemptions for you this year!", I'm going to thoroughly enjoy that. Does it stereotype accountants as being Jewish? Maybe. But the best heckles aren't necessarily politically correct. Current events in the sports world are a big deal when trying to be successful at getting under the opposition's skin.

You also have to be ruthless without going overboard. If the left fielder is going through a well-publicized divorce, it's not off limits. You just can't go too far with it. There are certain boundaries that you cannot cross because it just makes you an asshole. Not to mention, yelling about the same thing for nine innings is akin to hitting Barbaro with a bat. Once a joke is used, the moment passes. Consider the "That's what she said" phenomenon that we've all had to deal with at one time or another. In most cases, that joke stopped being funny fifteen minutes after somebody first used it. Yet, people continue to reply with that as a default response to anything that sounds remotely sexual.

As I said, I don't heckle. I prefer to make my comments and observations to the people I'm with, on Twitter, or in this weekly column. Even though some hecklers do possess the ornate ability to entice laughter from me, at the end of the day, I still know that the guy I'm yelling at is infinitely more successful than I will ever be. If I did yell something, knowing that realization in the back of my mind would keep me from enjoying my couple seconds of glory.

Also, if you're really drunk, I'm sorry, but you suck at heckling.

The reason for this semi-rant is the creepy individual who spent Friday night referring to Texas's David Murphy as "Humpty" and telling him that he shit his pants because there was a dirt stain inside his left buttcheek. Not only did he spend nine innings weirding out my fiancee's friend who was exposed to her first Home Run Porch game, but his overall aura of eccentricity (a nice way of putting it) gave him a three or four foot gap on either side of him. That's something I've rarely seen on the Porch as elbow room is usually at a premium.

People such as that guy do not enhance the game viewing experience for anyone. I keep to myself for the most part, except for when my baseball Tourette's kicks in and I start using the f-word a lot. Nobody is there to see me nor are they there to hear me. And if they are, I'm flattered, but your priorities are in the wrong order.

Again, if you're reading this, I imagine you're thinking of me as some sort of putz who pisses on everyone's parade. That's simply not the case. I'm just not the kind of person who understands why people do something just for the sake of doing it. That extends all the way to heckling the left fielder. If you're going to do it, do it right. Make it funny, relevant to the present, and if possible, something unique to the situation. Generic taunts are rarely, if ever, funny.

Heckling is an art form. It's not for everybody. Let's keep it that way.

While I'm on the subject of ranting about things, I'd like to address the people who think it's cute to wear baseball apparel of teams who aren't even playing to the game. I just don't get it. If you're from Boston and you're at an Indians-Rangers game, what point are you trying to prove by wearing your David Ortiz jersey? If you really wanted to support David Ortiz, you'd be on your ass at home watching the game on the MLB Extra Innings package.

Many of these people will volunteer their story if you make eye contact with them. "Well, you know, I'm from Boston," they begin unprovoked, "but my buddy offered me tickets to the game, so I had to come. I'm a Red Sox fan, but **I pull for the Indians when they aren't playing the Red Sox** ." The bolded part pisses me off. Like we're some sort of second prize or sympathy vote. We don't want your temporary fandom. Go away on the bandwagon you came in on. Like those stupid t-shirts that say "My favorite team is the Yankees...and anyone playing the Red Sox!" Blows my mind at how people eat up t-shirts with stupid slogans on them.

I had lunch with a friend from Las Vegas on Friday. He's originally from Cleveland and he and his wife, a Barberton native, watch just about every Indians game on TV. He mentioned to me that he recently went to AT&T Park in San Francisco and loved the field so he considers the Giants his "NL team" now and roots for them. This is fine because the Indians play the Giants once every three years for three games and his allegiance continues to lie with the Indians. The Giants success has no bearing on the Indians. Conversely, if the Red Sox are winning games, there's always the chance that their better record beats out the Indians for the wild card or impacts a playoff race or something.

Furthermore, how about these people who have two favorite teams playing against each other? The guy who goes to an Indians road game with his Tribe hat on but his Royals jersey. Fan schizophrenia if you will. Like I'm supposed to believe that this guy is happy no matter the outcome. What's more telling of your fandom? The hat or the jersey? Will you wear a Royals hat and an Indians jersey tomorrow to balance things out?

What's the point? The only thing you succeed at is looking like a douche that can't make up his mind.

It seems to me like baseball is the only sport this happens at. You never see some schmuck at a Browns game with his Browns jersey on and a purple Minnesota Vikings hat. Is it because there's an inherent fear of getting one's ass kicked at a football game? I've never been to a Cavs game, but I can't imagine anybody's prancing around the concourse in a Dwight Howard jersey when the Cavs are hosting the Memphis Grizzlies.

Kids are exempt from this because they don't know any better and just have favorite players. In those cases, the parents, generally the father, are at fault, so shame on you for not raising your kid to be a better fan of the team in his city. And, if, at the time your son or daughter starts to become a sports fan, Cleveland sucks, you might as well get them used to it because they have a lifetime of sports disappointment ahead of them.

Finally this week, I've gotta call you out, Cleveland fans. A beautiful Friday night with your first place Indians against the reigning AL Champion Texas Rangers and 16k and change show up on fireworks night? Come on. It's not like there's any other sport going on in the city right now. There's nothing worth watching on TV on Friday nights. Tickets are dirt cheap, there are all

kinds of ticket deals, and hell, tickets are probably selling below face value on Stubhub. Scalpers are probably on their knees begging people to buy their extras.

The $10 bleachers were full, which is great. The lower reserved with half price student ID tickets was probably 60-65% full. But there were entirely too many green seats. Get excited about this team. Since that bad start on the first homestand, this team has gone 13-6 and is an incredibly easy bunch to pull for.

I know many Ohioans are adopting their usual wait-and-see approach because they’re used to the bottom falling out. That’s fine. Skepticism is understandable. But skepticism shouldn’t keep you from going to a Friday night game against a “get your money’s worth” opponent with no rain and temps in the high 60s.

Get it together, Cleveland. This team deserves your support.