Per Paul Hoynes' Twitter account, the Indians and Nick Punto have "mutual interest" and while the obviousness of Nick Punto not being able to hit a baseball is relevant in the discussion, he would represent an upgrade defensively at 3B over the stylistic renderings of one Jayson Nix at the hot corner.

On the former point, Punto has spent the last 7 seasons of his career with the Twins, posting a career batting line of .247 OBP / .321 OBP / .322 SLG / .644 OPS with a career 73 OPS+. He has found himself beneath the "Tyner line" in each of the last two seasons, posting higher OBP than SLG…and his .328 OBP for those two years are below average.

No, Nick Punto cannot hit…

He can however play defense and if the Indians are interested in improving their infield defense, Punto would represent a significant step up from Nix at 3B. While I suppose that it is possible that the Indians are looking at him for 2B, the more likely scenario (if Punto is brought in) would be Punto entering the "3B Derby" with Nix and Cord Phelps (with all of Cleveland on the edge of their collective seat) to hold down 3B until Lonnie Chisenhall (hopefully) forces his way onto the parent club after getting his sea legs under him in AAA, where he has yet to play a game.

If you followed the "Blake/LaRocca/Selby" competition in Spring Training of 2003 with bated

breath, you may be in luck next Spring if Punto is signed. If you did not…well, you have another target at which to direct your vitriol.

Truthfully, I'd be somewhere in the middle as adding a guy like Punto makes sense (assuming they're paying him about what they paid Mike Redmond last year) as some insurance at 3B and 2B and offering a better defensive alternative at 3B on a team heavy with groundball pitchers but he certainly doesn't add much by way of optimism or expected wins for 2011.

Given the Indians' infield defense in 2010 however, adding a glove like Punto may make the team much less frustrating…when he's in the field at least.