Well, if Justin Verlander never picks up a bat again, and somehow that arm of his gets him a plaque in Cooperstown, he would be **the very worst hitter** in the Hall of Fame. He wouldn't exactly be alone in that infamy; Venice, Ohio's own Walter "Smokey" Alston is the museum's only current occupant without a Major League hit. In fact, the four-time World Champion Manager of the Brooklyn/Los Angeles Dodgers struck out in his only plate appearance against the Cubs in 1936, but the fine print says he was inducted as a Manager. Perhaps it isn't fair to compare to an exclusive group that does not include him, but his futility with the bat puts him in a place of his own among MVP's; he's the only one in a group that includes quite a few pitchers with a **.000 batting average**. We went all the way back down the MVP list to Dazzy Vance and Walter Johnson, just to make sure that statement was accurate.

Despite allowing the hapless Cubs to score two runs over 8 innings on Thursday, Verlander did nothing to little to help his own cause at Wrigley Field. The box score says he went 0-for-1 with two sacrifices, which could be interpreted as a respectable day at the plate, if they weren't two of the laziest sacrifice bunts these eyes have ever seen. In his only official at-bat of the day, a

2nd inning Fielder's Choice, Verlander massacred a potential big inning when Ryan Raburn was dead to rights at third base for the second out of the inning on his lazy ground ball to short. That appeared to be a devastating blow when Luis Valbuena evened the score at two in the bottom half of the inning with his first RBI since September 11, 2011 as a member of the Indians, but he was bailed out by his teammates' offense in this one.

Austin Jackson's RBI single in the bottom of the 7th inning gave Detroit 3-2 lead on the way to a 5-3 victory over the Cubs, boosting Verlander to 6-4 on the season, and 16-2 in 22 Inter-League games. That doesn't change the fact that he's got the big goose egg in 22 career at-bats. Even when you score this one on the bell curve, the lowly standards we hold our American League pitchers to offensively, **Verlander doesn't make the grade**.

With Cleveland and Chicago both losing, the victory puts the Tigers just 4 games off the pace in the American League Central Division Standings, two and a half games behind the Indians with about 100 games left to be played.