

Teams are listed alphabetically



**SIMPLY MARVELOUS:** Thome's no-frills approach to hitting has worked for him so far.

## Power bat

**Jim Thome** has a basic philosophy when it comes to hitting: Don't make it too complicated.

"I try to keep it simple," says the Indians first baseman. "When you're going good, you keep it simple because you want to stay in a groove. And when you're going bad, you keep it simple because that is the easiest way to get out of it."

Thome is in a groove, and that's why he's our Player of the Quarter. Entering this week, Thome is hitting .333 with eight home runs and 31 RBIs. Of his 47 hits, 25 were for extra bases.

"Jimmy's so strong, he doesn't need a big swing," manager Mike Hargrove says. "He just needs a short stroke. You get good bat speed by shortening your swing. Jimmy has done that, and it has paid off big for him and us."

**Pitching line of the quarter:** In an 11-2 loss to the Rangers on April 16, Scott Sanders, then with Detroit, was pounded for 16 hits and 11 runs in four innings.

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	K
Sanders	4	16	11	11	3	2

**Batting line of the quarter:** In a 14-7 win over the Indians on April 22, Chicago's Ray Durham reached base six times—three of them on errors—and scored four runs.

	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	AVG.
Durham	6	4	3	0	2	.500

**Pivotal point:** It doesn't matter how badly the Indians perform, the other teams in the division can't seem to gain ground. On May 1, a 7-5 victory over the Devil Rays signaled the end of a 4-10 slide, yet it was a stretch in which the team lost only a game in the standings. —Steve Herrick

## Chicago

17-22: 3rd

### Caruso may need more seasoning in minors



The team has been very patient with rookie shortstop **Mike Caruso**, but the patience is starting to run out. That's because it's looking more and more like the 20-year-old

GRADING OUT	
OFFENSE	D
The team was supposed to challenge for league's highest average, not its lowest.	
PITCHING	D
Team ERA, walks and opposing batting average all ranked near bottom of league.	
DEFENSE	C
Trouble up the middle—Caruso and Durham have combined for 15 errors.	

Caruso has been rushed to the major leagues. Caruso, who had only two years of Class A experience before winning the team's starting shortstop job in spring training, has looked like a seasoned veteran at times. But, more often, he has looked like a kid who is in over his head. "We like him, and we want to keep him here for as long as we can," manager **Jerry**

Manuel says. "But I have to see a little more life out of him." If the team decides to send Caruso to Class AAA Calgary for more experience, **Chris Snopce** would probably get most of the playing time at shortstop. The team also could call up **Benji Gil** from Class AAA.

**AT THIS PACE:** Ray Durham is on pace to hit .300 for the first time in his career, score 120 runs, steal 40 bases and hit 12 to 15 home runs. Most important, Durham's on-base percentage could be .400, which is what the team desperately needs from its leadoff hitter. As long as Durham remains patient and continues to swing at good pitches, he has a good chance of becoming an All-Star.

**THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE FUTURE:** Lefthander **Mike Sirotka** has emerged as the staff ace, and **Jaime Navarro** has shown signs of bouncing back from a disastrous 1997. **James Baldwin**, who was demoted to the bullpen, **Jason Bere** and **Scott Eyre**, though, need to show much more. At the plate, the team was hitting a very disappointing .258 at the quarter pole. If the team hopes to contend with Cleveland in the A.L. Central, outfielders **Mike Cameron** and **Magglio Ordonez**, need to become more consistent at the plate.

**FORECAST:** If the team plays up to its potential, which hasn't been the case during the first quarter of the season, a second-place finish is the best it can hope for. But if the team doesn't start clicking, a last-place finish in the mediocre A.L. Central is possible. —Scot Gregor

### WHITE SOX

	AVG	G	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	OBP	SLG	SB	K	BB	E
*Abbott	.326	23	43	3	14	3	8	.326	.605	0	6	0	1
*Norton#	.304	21	56	10	17	3	10	.350	.589	0	14	4	1
Durham#	.291	38	148	29	43	3	14	.384	.453	9	19	21	7
Thomas	.278	40	144	28	40	5	28	.385	.465	2	26	26	0
Ventura+	.278	40	144	22	40	4	17	.370	.465	0	25	21	6
O'Brien	.265	24	68	5	18	2	8	.320	.412	0	18	5	2
Snopce	.264	19	53	5	14	0	2	.328	.264	2	12	5	0
Kreuter#	.255	25	55	5	14	0	7	.382	.309	0	6	12	2
Belle	.243	40	144	20	35	9	32	.337	.521	1	27	23	1
*Ordonez	.243	37	136	21	33	5	11	.293	.412	2	20	9	0
*Caruso+	.240	30	100	16	24	1	10	.276	.360	2	7	3	8
Cordero	.233	20	73	15	17	4	12	.288	.425	0	15	5	1
Sierra#	.226	21	53	4	12	3	9	.268	.509	0	9	3	0
Cameron	.211	33	109	15	23	1	13	.307	.284	3	29	15	0

GRAND SLAMS: Cordero (1)

	ERA	W-L	G	IP	H	R	ER	HR	K	BB	SV	Avg.
Simas	0.00	0-0	8	7.2	3	0	0	0	6	1	2	1.11
Fouke	2.61	1-0	18	20.2	14	6	6	1	20	7	1	1.192
Sirotka+	4.33	5-3	8	54.0	58	31	26	9	30	10	0	.278
Eyre+	4.61	1-4	8	41.0	38	23	21	11	31	29	0	.247
Navarro	4.88	4-3	9	55.1	62	33	30	7	24	25	0	.288
Castillo, C.	5.58	1-3	20	30.2	28	19	19	5	22	14	0	.246
Castillo, T.+	5.59	1-1	15	19.1	25	13	12	3	13	7	0	.305
Bere	5.75	1-4	8	40.2	50	29	26	3	23	32	0	.309
Baldwin	8.56	2-3	10	41.0	57	43	39	7	29	26	0	.328
*Fordham+	8.62	1-0	13	15.2	23	15	15	5	9	14	0	.338
Casiano+	13.50	0-0	3	2.0	5	3	3	0	2	1	0	.455

SHUTOUTS: None

COMPLETE GAMES: Sirotka (2), Baldwin (1)

## Cleveland

23-18: 1st

### Steadiness, durability are Nagy's hallmarks



Although **Charles Nagy** hasn't been the prototype No. 1 starter the team has been looking for, he has been steady and durable. Including his

GRADING OUT	
OFFENSE	B
The lineup scores runs in bunches, but overall it has been inconsistent.	
PITCHING	C
The rotation should get better, but the bullpen still has some question marks.	
DEFENSE	C
Solid gloves in the field, but the team already has had four-and five-error games.	

win over Baltimore May 14, he had 62 victories since 1994, ranking him fifth among major league pitchers, and had a string of 128 consecutive starts dating back to October 3, 1993. That was why G.M. **John Hart** was eager to sign Nagy, 31, to a four-year contract extension worth \$24 million (with a club option for 2003). "If we had let him go out on the (free-agent) market next

winter, who knows what would have happened?" Hart says. Although Nagy said, "This is not a load off my mind, but I am happy to get it behind me," some thought the negotiations, which bogged down in the offseason, may have affected his performance. He went 4-2 in his first nine starts but had a 5.81 ERA and allowed 17 home runs in 57 1/3 innings.

**AT THIS PACE:** Bartolo Colon, who barely made the team in spring training, has been its best pitcher (3-1, 2.68 ERA before losing a 1-0 decision Sunday) and could win in double figures. Colon, 23, throws hard—he has been clocked in the high 90s late in games—and now is mixing in his breaking pitches. One potential problem: He has had elbow problems late in past seasons.

**THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE FUTURE:** **David Justice** and **Jim Thome** have been the only consistent run producers. The **Shawon Dunston** experiment at second base ended after a month. **Manny Ramirez** and **Travis Fryman** must pick up their offensive games. The rotation has been average—there are signs it will get better—and closer **Mike Jackson** converted 11 of his first 14 save opportunities.

**FORECAST:** Cleveland hasn't seen a pennant race since 1959. At times, this year's team seems willing to oblige with its inconsistent play. But the Indians have too much talent for anything resembling a race. Look for them to pull away as the season goes on and win the division for the fourth straight year. —Steve Herrick

### INDIANS

	AVG	G	AB	R	H	HR	RBI	OBP	SLG	SB	K	BB	E
Whiten#	.444	5	9	2	4	1	4	.500	.778	0	1	1	0
Thome+	.333	40	141	31	47	8	31	.443	.624	0	42	30	4
Justice+	.320	39	147	28	47	9	36	.400	.599	1	22	23	0
Bell	.297	21	64	8	19	2	8	.329	.453	0	11	3	2
Vizquel#	.295	39	149	25	44	0	18	.373	.369	4	17	17	1
Lofton+	.283	41	166	32	47	3	21	.362	.428	13	19	21	4
Ramirez	.262	36	141	16	37	6	24	.325	.440	1	32	13	4
Alomar	.259	31	116	14	30	2	14	.287	.379	0	10	5	2
Giles+	.241	38	108	23	26	10	30	.394	.528	5	31	28	0
Borders	.222	17	54	7	12	0	3	.263	.278	0	18	2	2
Dunston	.213	31	94	15	20	0	9	.252	.362	5	13	6	2
Fryman	.208	39	149	17	31	5	17	.280	.362	0	38	14	5
Branson+	.185	19	27	0	5	0	3	.185	.259	0	2	0	3

GRAND SLAMS: Alomar (1)

	ERA	W-L	G	IP	H	R	ER	HR	K	BB	SV	Avg.
Villone+	2.57	0-0	7	7.0	4	2	2	1	2	4	0	1.167
Colon	2.68	3-1	8	53.2	46	21	16	5	43	21	0	.227
Jackson	2.81	0-1	20	16.0	14	5	5	2	15	2	11	.246
Kriviya+	3.54	2-0	8	20.1	21	8	8	2	8	10	0	.263
Burba	3.62	4-4	9	59.2	54	25	24	6	39	22	0	.245
Assenmacher+	4.02	2-3	20	15.2	22	9	7	2	14	5	0	.328
Mesa	4.21	3-1	21	25.2	25	17	12	4	22	7	0	.253
Plunk	5.21	2-1	18	19.0	24	11	11	3	18	8	0	.316
Wright	5.40	1-3	9	50.0	56	34	30	7	40	23	0	.281
Nagy	5.81	4-2	9	57.1	76	47	37	17	36	18	0	.317
Ogea	5.88	1-2	5	26.0	28	17	17	3	12	12	0	.275
*Rakers	9.00	0-0	1	1.0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	.000

SHUTOUTS: Colon (1)

COMPLETE GAMES: Colon (2)