

Luis Castillo vs Clayton Kershaw

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,9commentsLuis Castillo vs Clayton Kershaw EDTShareTweetShareShareReds at Dodgers Game One: Preview and Lineups and Jackie Robinson DayAaron Doster-USA TODAY SportsToday is Jackie Robinson Day, which is a cool thing. And the Reds are spending it with the Dodgers, which of course was Jackie Robinson's team. And they are spending it in Los Angeles, which was Jackie Robinson's city. So there's lots of cool things here. Another cool thing is that Clayton Kershaw will make his season debut this evening. There was a time not long ago that many intelligent baseball people were talking about how Kershaw could possibly be the Best Pitcher of All Time. But alas, time has taken its toll on the man. He has averaged just 160 innings over the last three seasons due to a litany of injuries. He is still throwing like a magnificent super champion, just not so much as before. Speaking of magnificent super champions, Luis Castillo take the bump this evening for the Reds. He has made three starts so far this year and has looked every bit as good as vintage pinnacle Kershaw. He has surrendered just two runs (a 0.92 ERA, btw) and only five hits (a 0.66 WHIP, for serious). There is no possible universe in which he could possibly be pitching better than he is right now. If any mid-April tilt featuring a team at the bottom of the NL Central can be considered appointment television, this is it. Lineups Eduardo Nunez was still officially listed as day-to-day when he hit his pinch-hit 3-run homer"This is why it's folly to predict a playoff series. And trust me, people with whom I work are well aware that I am the most thoroughly-read baseball fan in the office, and I have been asked who will win this WS daily. And I tell them all this same thing. It's silly to say

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, because there is no telling which player will be cold and which hot, and which team will get the bounces and which will not, which team will suffer first inning jitters and which will not, and how fortune will schedule the timing of all that. Case in point, Eduardo f#\$king Nunez. Yeah, The MVP of Game 1 of the World Series Was One of the Worst Players in Baseball. Did you know that he was still officially listed as day-to-day when he came off the bench and hit that pinch-hit 3-homer in Game 1 of the WS and crush the souls of Tiki Ti fans everywhere? Now, I can't quite place my finger on it, but it seems to me that I recall some other World Series in the distant past when a hobbled player climbed off the injury list and stepped to the plate late in a Game 1 and hit a miraculous home run to set the tone for the home team. I wonder where I heard that..? Anyway, it's just as silly as it is to believe one can tell the future in these things, as it is silly to believe that one can predict the past. So Tiki Ti manager Dave Roberts pulls Pedro Baez right after Baez K's Mitch Moreland and Xander Bogaerts on 9 pitches (with an IBB to JB Martinez sandwiched in between), and brings in erstwhile starter Alex Wood to face Rafael Devers. Kowloon manager Alex Cora then takes out Devers and inserts Nunez. 2 pitches later Nunez puts the game out of reach as Kowloon takes Game 1 by a final score of 8-4. And that triggers a flood of second-guessing and blaming Roberts for over-managing. That's as if Baez would have pitched a perfect game from there on out and his presence on the mound would have brought 2 winning runs across the plate for Tiki Ti. Instead, nobody actually knows what would have happened. It's why I don't don't guess

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, nor second-guess, in these things. They are what they are. Just watch what happens for what it is worth, because that is all there is anyway. Besides, that's a hell of a lot of fun, too. Unless you hate both of these teams. If you do, you are not alone. Even Mother Nature tried to shut this whole thing down. Me, I have other ways to ignore my hate and redirect my love of baseball. You might have noticed. Have some No-More-Than-Six-Games-Left-HaloLinks: A Little Bit Of Angels News In case it was unclear before now, it's a pretty important thing to the Angels that they consider signing Mike Trout to an extension. I know. I was taken by surprise, too. That is brilliant. I should have thought of it. That's why they run a pro baseball team and I...well...do not..... The very best reason for choosing a Brad Ausmus to manage

the Angels over reaching into the grab bag of unknowns hoping to strike skipper gold comes in the middle part of one particular sentence in this BaseballEssential article: "This is where Ausmus' experience comes into play, as they can't afford to have a manager learn on the fly, and he can gain the respect of someone of Pujols' stature." Yeah. This ain't the Astros Tank era. We have a nearly competitive roster now that, with some health and a couple more additions

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, is definitely a playoff team. This is not a long-term project.....We will learn who Brad Ausmus has become. Here is who Brad Ausmus used to be. (h/t reddit).....Some day soon we are going to awaken to the news that Roberto Baldoquin is not going to work out, in spite of all the chances he has been granted. He went 0 for 4 in AFL yesterday. That makes him .095/.095/.269 in the AFL to date.....Thank you, Jerry.Noel Ramirez, a man of the people.....Everywhere In BaseballYou know that Joe Kelly you saw last night pitch the 6th inning for the Red Sox? The one who blew through Matt Kemp, Kiki Hernandez, and Yasiel Puig? Except for the fact that the UC Riverside grad, in his own words, chose to be "a belligerent drunk" on draft day back in 2009 he would have been a Halo. That means that, after drafting Randal Grichuk and Mike Trout, Eddie Bane was prepared to take Kelly instead of a Tyler Skaggs or Garrett Richards or Tyler Kehrner (we don't know which one).....What do you think? Are we getting a little too technical with baserunning replays?.....And this is considered awesome? The Red Sox have enough room at Fenway to put in sleeping quarters for the home team, but visiting teams have a clubhouse so small that post-game interviews have to be conducted out on the field. That could be real fun if we get to a Game 7 and it's snowing.....Looks Like Eric Hosmer's dullard offensive woes have chased Mark McGwire right out of San Diego.....Hmmm. This ain't too bad. Team Bryce Harper/Scott Boras are opening up the Free Agent contract talks with a starting number of only \$350 million. It wasn't too long ago that he was tagged to be MLB's first \$500 million contract. He may still get there, but he will need a \$150 million bidding war if this news is true. I think that the first \$25 - \$40 million is a gimme.....Interesting. Some guys would have been Hall of Famers

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, if only they could hit BOTH LHP and RHP. I guess the same could be said about me, too, so uh.....I'm not sure if I won \$1.6 billion, since I keep my tickets in the car and am too GA to go out there and check. Not knowing keeps the dream alive. But if I did, this is the last Links article I shall ever write maybe I can afford a luxury box at Angels Stadium. I certainly wouldn't buy the LA Galaxy..... Because east coast whining about west coast start times is not limited to Mike Trout baseball or World Series Baseball. It's now about other sports, too.....The Duffle BagFiveThirtyEight doing what they do best: charts. This one on the odds of the Dodgers/Red Sox season to date.....If you were on the fence, and were looking for one reason to think of Mookie Betts as MVP, and his bowling acumen is not the thing, try a free taco.....A-Rod in yet another one of those stories where everybody is the bad guy.....

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