

1. The Cardinals have a deeper lineup than the Cubs.
 - a. The fact that you came up with a statistical measurement for this is pretty funny.
 - b. This is the first instance of extremely convenient selection of statistics for which the Cards have the advantage. I guess you lined up a list of stats for each team on your screen and picked the ones (even segmented positions in the lineup, LOL) that the Cards were better at. How's that? **You want me to include the 1-4 hitters as well? That only hurts your argument. I was being nice not skewing the stats with Pujols and Holliday.**
 - c. I pay this first point zero credence. **Why? OBP is the definition of "not an out." It makes total sense. I don't care if I get production from the bottom of my order. I just want them to turn over the order and get through the Pitcher so next inning Pujols can eat faces.**
 - d. Here's one reason in a list too long to elaborate on – according to your definition of OBP as an indication of a team's number of "easy outs," the Cards as a team have far more "easy outs" than the Nationals.
 - e. I get what you were trying to say about the 5-8 hitters, but may I remind you that the Cubs lineup will soon include Soto at the 8-spot. Just to humor you, if you sub in Soto for Hill, the Cubs 5-8 OBP is .335 – exactly what you posted for the Cardinals. **I actually didn't know Soto was coming back so soon or even why he's been out since I can remember. I'll give you a boost for OBP with him in place of Hill, but coming off an oblique strain and a 1 month leave and having to play the most physically demanding position on the field, I'm not sold on him being entirely effective.**
 - f. Finally, the number you posted for the Cardinals is misleading. You evenly averaged Ryan's OBP (played 81 games) with Lugo's much, much higher OBP (played 10 games) for the 8-spot. That's way out of wack. **The fact is that against any given pitcher La Russa can manipulate our lineup to be the most effective. He can choose between Lugo, Schumaker (lefty) and Ryan at will. And the fact of the matter is, Ryan is basically a rookie and is nursing injury, while Schumaker is fine and doing well at the lead-off spot. It's far more likely that you will see Lugo in that spot than Ryan going into September. In fact, I should have just left out Ryan completely, thus hurting your argument even more.**
 - g. Even if your numbers were accurate, a .012 difference here means that over their collective next 300 at bats, your 5-8 hitters will get 3 more hits than our 5-8 hitters. That's in your 10 reasons the Cards will win it??? Talk about a stretch. **It's true that the Cardinals have a deeper lineup. That's the point. It does not by itself mean that the Cardinals will win the NL Central.**
2. The Cardinals have a more dangerous lineup than the Cubs.
 - a. Here's another interesting adjective – dangerous – that I have no idea what to do with. **At any given time, the heart of our lineup can provide base runners or dramatically change a game with power. Which is why OPS is perfect for this. And belittle it all you want, it's actually quite relevant.**
 - b. Your attempt at normalization, while sincerely appreciated, is totally deficient. Your "halfway" approach gave equal weight to (1) Holliday's best ten game stretch of his career that included 43 at-bats and (2) the entire remainder of his career, which includes 3,045 at-bats. Come on now. With that approach, he received a 1.239 OPS for your little stat sheet when his career OPS is .932. That's a 33% increase. Lugo got a 22% increase here over his career OPS. **I disagree. I think it was quite generous to normalize it the way I did. There are only 2 months left in the season and these guys have showed no signs of slowing down since coming to STL. I have no crystal ball, but to say that they will somehow plummet to their career avg. is way more unfair.**
 - c. I know that it's not worth your or my time to figure out the actual normalization. But I think you can agree that the numbers for the Cards would come down significantly. In fact, I would bet that the advantage would flip to the Cubs. **Unless you're psychic, you couldn't figure out "actual" normalization.**
 - d. Also, this is another example of careful and convenient selection of a portion of the lineup. As a whole, the Cubs have a higher OPS than the Cardinals, by a very small amount. Does that mean that our complete lineup is more "dangerous" than yours? If I were to use any old adjectives that came to mind, I would say that this makes the Cubs "deeper" than the Cardinals when it comes to "danger." **Yeah, it means that the bottom of the Cubs' order has more power than the bottom of the Cards' order. But bottom of the order power doesn't scare me at all.**
3. The Cardinals have a better defense than the Cubs.
 - a. I find it hilarious that you think Ankiel, or any center fielder for that matter, is "obviously" better than Fukodume. He's one of the best CFs I've ever seen. No joke. This Asian dude seems to never have to

- go very far for a ball and has a canon. Ankiel looks good out there because of his athleticism, but is not a fundamentally sound defense player. **The Cardinals have TWO CF's better than Fukodume. Count it.**
- b. It really hurts to admit that our left fielder is worse than yours. Would you agree that, taking Adam Dunn out of the equation, we have the worst two left fielders in baseball? I know though - Soriano is definitely worse. **This is probably the first time Holliday has ever won a defensive argument. BUT - he is a step up from Duncan, who may have actually been worse than Soriano.**
 - c. Of what you listed, I'll give you catcher and shortstop, even though Theriot isn't bad. RF (which is soon to be Sam Fuld instead of Bradley – a serious defensive upgrade) is in the toss up and CF goes to the Cubs. **1. With Bradley's (surprisingly) high OBP, I seriously doubt Sweet Lou will take him out of the lineup. 2. Ludwick is massively overrated simply because he's not quick (but certainly no slower than the league avg.). He makes great catches and gets great jumps, has no fear of the wall and has an absolute cannon for an arm. Seriously, watch a game or two and check how conservative the other teams' 3rd base coaches are when balls are hit to RF. See <http://sports.wbztv.com/mlb/getleaders.asp?rank=328>. Sam Fuld (if that is his real name) on that list? I think not.**
 - d. So far, you're 3 for 3 in convenient stat selection. Here, the convenient choice was that “no statistics were needed.” **The Cubs have a better fielding percentage (slightly) than the Cardinals. Given that, how could you summarily dismiss the Cubbies' D? So far you're 3 for 3 is bitching and moaning about perfectly reasonable and fair analysis. And you just admitted that I was correct about this point, so beat it.**
4. The Cardinals have a better starting rotation than the Cubs.
 - a. Getting tired now. So these are going to shorten up.
 - b. The advantage in ERA is small, but significant enough I guess. The Cards' numbers here are better than I thought.
 - c. Thus, while the Cards may have a slight edge, I feel good about the Cubs SPs.
I really just used this - although it is true - to further emphasize #5, which you are a fool to dismiss like you do. Two months with 4 starters, three of which are in the Top 10 in NL ERA??? That's fucking huge and you know it.
 5. Remaining schedule allows for 4 starters.
 - a. This is pretty speculative and assumes that everything will go as planned. That is, no injuries, minimal early exits from games, no rainouts, etc.
 - b. But, okay, you get to Carpenter more often. That's probably a good thing.
See above
 6. The Cardinals have a better set-up bullpen than the Cubs.
 - a. I honestly have no clue about the Cards set-up guys.
 - b. I only know that Marmol usually gets the job done (although it might get ugly).
Well you see the numbers there and numbers do not lie. Marmol is a train wreck who can't find the strike zone and Heilman is a joke. If I were Sweet Lou, I'd make Guzman my set-up guy.
 7. The Cardinals have a better closer.
 - a. I don't know anything about Franklin, but those numbers seem great.
 - b. Gregg blows T-Rex cock.
Yeah, now you know how Isringhausen made me feel.
 8. The Cardinals run the bases better.
 - a. I'll give you this one.
 - b. Big deal.
Every time I see Pujols take an extra base on a single or see a sweet hit & run, I get a little wet. I think it's a huge deal. Oh - and on a related note (this has more to do with Defense) - other teams simply cannot run the bases against the Redbirds. Holy shit Molina throws out 60% of base stealers and picks-off like 2 per week. Insane. So yes, I think base running, especially when head-to-head vs. the Cardinals, is a huge deal.
 9. The Cardinals have a better manager.

- a. Why limit it to the last 15 years? You eliminated Lou's time with the Yankees and his World Series winning Reds!!! What the hell? **Because I think that as people get older and more experienced they either get (a) wiser and better at what they do, or (b) old and out of touch. Guess what I'm driving at here? Besides, (a) winning with the Yankees is like scoring with chicks at frat parties, and (b) 15 years isn't exactly a small sample size.**
 - b. As long as we are using this method (pick whatever stat/cutoff date/portion of the lineup that works best for one side's argument), let's look at La Russa's winning percentage with the Cardinals (.542) versus Piniella's winning percentage with the Cubs (.557). Hooray, Lou must be better. **Lou inherited a very good Cubs team from your boy Dusty Baker, while La Russa has built/rebuilt the Cardinals on several occasions. I would argue that Piniella's overall win % but lack of post-season success is just even more indicative of his failure as a coach.**
 - c. Actually, that was fun so let me try again...according to Las Vegas the Cubs are favorites to win the Central. I'm betting that means about as much to you as the points of this list means to me - nothing. Carefully selected, manipulated stats are no indicator of one team's chances to win a division over another. **Well I got ridiculously favorable odds on the Cardinals winning the pennant when I bet back in June. So Vegas can jerk itself off all it wants, I'll be laughing all the way to the bank come October.**
 - d. PS – Lou has 7 postseason appearances, not 6. **Huh. Wild Card?**
10. The Cardinals have an easier remaining schedule.
- a. True. I hope they don't fall asleep and take things for granted like a certain Californian I know. **I don't know what that is supposed to mean but I don't think you know any "Californians."**