

Thursday, January 13, 2005

Jeromy Burnitz

According to this story, the Astros are interested in acquiring Jeromy Burnitz to play center field. Included in the article is this quote from Burnitz's agent, Howard Simon He may not be as good in center field as some of the pure center fielders, but everybody who's seen him patrol center field in Coors is convinced he does at least, if not better than, an adequate job. Now, there's some marketing going on here, because Simon is, after all, getting a cut of Burnitz's salary. That said, Burnitz's Rate in center field last year, covering 69 games, says that he'd have ended up eight runs below average through 100 games, so if he saw, say, 135 games in center field for the Astros, he you might expect him to cost the team ten or eleven runs below the average center fielder.

Meanwhile, right there on the Astros's roster is this dude from Smithtown, NY who put up a rate of 100 in 150 games in 2003 and a rate of 97 in 66 games last year. Granted, he'll be 39 years old this year, and granted, he put up a rate of 89 in left field over 83 games, but is there any reason the Astros would prefer Burnitz over Craig Biggio in center field other than the fact that Biggio got shoved out of his position by Carlos Beltran last year and is thus considered a full-time left fielder now? Sure, Biggio's not likely to be a defensive presence like Darin Erstad or anything, but don't we have to figure that neither Biggio nor Burnitz is likely to be significantly better than the other this year?

On the other hand, Burnitz put up a .283 EqA last year, compared to .270 from Biggio, and, while the erstwhile Rockie was coming off a terrible year and a half, Biggio's essentially been a mediocre hitter since 2000. That said, I still like Biggio because I'd consider Burnitz a bigger risk for total collapse than the scrappy former second baseman. As usual, though, PECOTA will have something to say on that score in a couple of months. Unfortunately, by that point the signings will be done and over with, which doesn't help me analyze the potential of this move at this point.

Posted by jason in Baseball at 16:57