

## **"A REAL TIGERS FAN"**

By Jeff Daniels

What is a Real Tigers Fan? I'm glad you asked:

A real Tigers fan believes Al Kaline is the best player on Earth. And all the other planets. In this or any other solar system.

A real Tigers fan believes Ty Cobb wasn't dirty, he was just being aggressive.

A real Tigers Fan kept his season tickets after the 2002 Season when we lost 106 games.

A real Tigers Fan kept his Season Tickets after the 2003 Season when we lost 119 games.

A real Tigers Fan knows who Chico Fernandez was.

A real Tigers Fan loves to beat the Yankees. Especially, in October. Twice.

A real Tigers Fan does not say, "It's supposed to rain. Let's stay home." He says, "I hope it rains. The Yankees are a terrible 'bad weather team'."

A real Tigers Fan knows who George Cantor is and has read all his books.

A real Tigers Fan thinks nothing of getting to a Seven O'Clock Game at 4:30.

A real Tigers Fan believes when he cheers for his favorite Tiger, the only reason they don't respond is because they're being polite.

A real Tigers Fan has two hot dogs per game. Unless he's a vegetarian, then he only has one.

A real Tigers Fan is secretly jealous of the Bat Boy.

A real Tigers Fan loves Comerica Park and misses Tiger Stadium.

A real Tigers Fan will not go to Cooperstown until Jack Morris does. And Alan Trammell. And Lou Whitaker.

A real Tigers Fan believes Miguel Cabrera could hit .300 with his eyes closed and .400 if the rest of the league were stupid enough to pitch to him.

A real Tigers Fan believes Max Scherzer's different colored eyes distract the batter.

A real Tigers Fan knows that in between Clark Gable and George Clooney was Rocky Colavito.

A real Tigers Fan knows why time stopped in 1935, 1945, 1968, and 1984.

A real Tigers Fan thinks nothing of asking his favorite Tiger to sign the part of his body closest to the tattoo of his favorite Tiger.

A real Tigers Fan knows Rod Allen was an OF/DH on the '84 Tigers.

A real Tigers Fan knows Mario Impemba had nothing to do with the Super Mario Brothers.

A real Tigers Fan wears his best Tiger merchandise on Opening Day. Then he buys other stuff.

A real Tigers Fan wears his Tiger Cap to bed. On his honeymoon.

A real Tigers Fan has Detroit Tiger underwear. In assorted colors.

A real Tigers Fan has memorized Ernie Harwell's THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE.

A Real Tigers Fan thinks Jose Feliciano's rendition of the Star Spangled Banner makes Kate Smith sound like a fat lady singing.

A real Tigers Fan knows Goose Goslin was neither a goose nor a gosling.

After winning on Opening Day, a Real Tigers Fan says, "We may not lose another game."

A real Tigers Fan knows who "The Gater" was, what he did, and how well he did it.

A real Tigers Fan will never forget Dick McAuliffe introducing himself to Tommy John.

A real Tigers Fan believes Mark Fidrych talking to a baseball was perfectly normal behavior.

A real Tigers Fan can re-enact Dave Rozema's karate kick without pulling a hamstring.

A real Tigers Fan knows the Pope's "triregnum" - also known as a "papal triple crown" - is not as cool as Miggy's.

A real Tigers Fan knows the Pope's "triple crown" is not as cool as Miggy's.

A real Tigers Fan knows that if Cy Young were alive today, he'd be our #3 Starter.

A real Tigers Fan has no problem saying Don Wert was an attractive man.

A real Tigers Fan knows Lou Brock was out. By a mile.

A real Tigers Fan has been to Spring Training. More than once.

A real Tigers Fan thinks Lakeland, Florida, is better than Cancun.

A real Tigers Fan believes Lakeland, Florida, beats the Bahamas.

A real Tigers Fan believes a trip to Spring Training beats the Bahamas.

A real Tigers Fan remembers the die-hard passion of Bob Talbert.

A real Tigers Fan thinks Fenway Park is bad architecture.

A real Tigers Fan buys Standing Room Only.

A real Tigers Fan knows how to spell "Castellanos".

A real Tigers Fan watches each pitch in April like it matters as much as those in September because it does.

A real Tigers Fan said, "Doug Fister is closing in on the Consecutive Strikeout Record" before the announcers did.

A real Tigers Fan does not say a word when Justin Verlander has no hits going into the 7th inning. And I didn't just say anything now.

A real Tigers Fan will always reach for a foul ball hit off the bat of a Tiger. All others are ignored.

A real Tigers Fan considers the Fox Sports Girls family.

A real Tigers Fan watches the game in his Call Sam Man Cave.

A real Tigers Fan believes he's a distant relative of the Bernsteins.

A real Tigers Fan has an autograph from at least two of the Bernsteins.

A real Tigers Fan has met Mrs. Bernstein.

A real Tigers Fan can understand every word Paws is trying to say.

A real Tigers Fan misses doubleheaders, Tiger Stadium, and the Lindell A.C.

A real Tigers Fan attends games in April and September.

A real Tigers Fan believes "Trammell to Whitaker to Bergman" was better than "Tinker to Evers to Chance".

A real Tigers Fan likes the Pistons, the Red Wings, and the Lions. But he would marry the Tigers.

A real Tigers Fan remembers his father taking him to his first game. And taking his father to his last.

A real Tigers Fan has no reason to go to St. Louis, San Francisco, or Boston, but we can go to New York any time we want.

Last season, when the Angels scored 9 runs in the first inning, a Real Tigers Fan stayed for the whole game.

(Shot of JD looking into camera)

That's right, the whole game.

(JD on camera)

A Real Tigers Fan can close his eyes and see Kirk Gibson rounding third and coming home. He can hear the sound of Hank Greenberg launching one into the Upper Deck and see Willie Horton rope one down the left field line. He can see Al Kaline rob someone of extra bases deep in the right field corner, Charlie Gehringer make a backhanded stab look routine, and Jo-Jo White stretch a single into a double. He can hear Dizzy Trout's fastball smack into the palm of Bill Freehan's glove, see Schoolboy Rowe pick up a rosin bag and Ty Cobb reach for a bat. He can imagine swapping stories with Sparky Anderson, talking spit balls with Mickey Cochrane, and privately suggesting to Mayo Smith that playing Mickey Stanley at shortstop in the '68 World Series might not be a bad idea. Sure, none of that's real, unless you're one of us, and then it's as real as...well, Opening Day. Because to us, Opening Day is more than just the beginning of another season. On Opening Day, what we're really doing, is coming home.

(JD puts on Tiger Baseball Cap)

Welcome Home.