



Last week, I mentioned how Ubaldo Jimenez became more of a pitcher than a thrower and that was successful for him against the Blue Jays. On Monday, he morphed back into the pitcher we remember from 2012. The guy who makes coitus with a wood chipper somehow seem more pleasant than watching him pitch. It took him all of four hitters to zap the Home Opener energy out of a crowd of 41,000-plus. Following that start, the Indians turned on the spin cycle and created Ubaldogate.

One of my favorite baseball people on the internet, Kyle Boddy, has been covering the Ubaldo saga from every angle. I've mentioned him before, but Boddy runs a baseball training academy in Seattle that focuses on teaching the proper mechanics of hitting and pitching through physiological science. It's about staying healthy. Pitchers lose velocity and lose command when they're pitching hurt or with bad mechanics.

The day after Jimenez's first start against Toronto, Boddy was [skeptical](#). In his well-trained eyes, Jimenez's mechanics were not going to increase velocity and they were going to put additional strain on his elbow. Boddy's last line read, "Ubaldo Jimenez will never be that guy again if he continues to throw the way he does—and I believe he will continue to lose velocity throughout the season if these mechanics keep up."

As it turned out, "throughout the season" became "in his second start". Jimenez's velocity was down so much that PITCHf/x data classified 51 of Jimenez's 91 pitches as changeups. PITCHf/x data classifies pitches by speed and by movement. The system was incorrectly classifying his fastballs as changeups. Of course, saying "incorrectly" is debatable, since the pitch had the speed and movement of a changeup.

The Indians have said all along that they don't want Jimenez to care about velocity. They want him to focus on command and using the bottom of the strike zone instead of worrying about throwing the ball past the hitter. Well, they saw what happens when he loses velocity and cannot command his pitches. In his first start in Toronto, Jimenez had 11 swings and misses. In Monday's abhorrent effort, the Yankees whiffed three times.

Clearly there's something wrong here and it's more than just Jimenez's historically-questionable command. The Indians chose an interesting route to describe the loss in velocity. Building off of the wireless internet and cell phone reception issues that plagued the ballpark in the Home Opener, the Indians' propaganda machine seemed to work just fine. Let's blame the radar gun!

Here's [Paul Hoynes on the "faulty radar gun"](#) that affected Jimenez's start:

Jimenez has spent much of this spring throwing between 90 mph to 92 mph with the ability to hit 94 to 95 mph when needed. Monday, however, he rarely hit 90 mph and spent most of the game being clocked in the mid to 80s.

Turns out there was a problem with the PITCHf/x program at Progressive Field on Monday that affected the velocity readings that appeared on the ballpark signboards. The readings affected every pitcher who appeared in the game, not just Jimenez.

Reportedly, the ballpark scoreboard was 2.6 mph to 2.8 mph lower than what the velocity pitchers were actually throwing at according to radar guns behind the plate.

The system uses three tracking cameras and a central pitch tracking system in every stadium. The data can be sent to in real time to television broadcasts or other sites to analyze performances.

The problem with Jimenez was when he saw his declining velocity on the scoreboard, he tried to throw harder. However, that ended up slowing his delivery down.

A reasonable argument, right? There had been technical issues in the ballpark and Jimenez, who has a questionable mental makeup anyway, was compensating for his lack of velocity.

My bullshit detector immediately went off, in large part because I have been reading Boddy's analyses on Jimenez and his awful mechanics. As it turns out, [Boddy's bullshit detector was in full force](#) as well:

This has happened before in other parks, so it's a totally plausible theory. The only problem is that Hoynes is absolutely wrong.

Hiroki Kuroda pitched against Ubaldo Jimenez. Here are his Brooks Baseball PITCHf/x average velocities:

April 8th (the slow gun day): 90-91 MPH ([link](#))

April 3rd (vs. BOS): 90-91 MPH ([link](#))

So you're telling me Kuroda was throwing 92-93 instead? Let's look at some other pitchers from that game.

Matt Albers, April 8th: 92 MPH

Matt Albers, April 6th: 93.5 MPH (+1.5 MPH)

Albers seems to have been throwing a bit harder, but he was also on one day's rest in the April 8th game.

Joba Chamberlain, April 8th: 93.8 MPH

Joba Chamberlain, April 6th: 92.5 MPH (-1.3 MPH)

Joba threw harder in the "slow gun" day. So apparently Joba is throwing something like 96-97 MPH again? Definitely something to tell the Yankees' brass, I'm sure they'd be very happy.

Let's recap exactly what Ubaldo's velocity loss was:

Ubaldo Jimenez, April 8th: 11 fastballs at 90.3 MPH, 51 "changeups" at 84.8 MPH.
Ubaldo Jimenez, April 3rd: 28 fastballs at 93.1 MPH, 23 changeups at 83.7 MPH.

So you're telling me Ubaldo threw 51 changeups? Doesn't seem likely. His h-break/v-break for his changeup on April 8th wasn't even close to the same pitch on April 3rd. Compare for yourself using the links above – on April 8th it was -5.34/+8.06, on April 6th it was -6.36/+5.17.

*You know what a pitch with -5.34/+8.06 break is most similar to in Ubaldo's pitch selection? **A four-seam fastball.***

Boddy, originally from Northeast Ohio, remains an Indians fan even though he lives in Washington. He took to Twitter in an effort to get the truth out.



The screenshot shows a tweet from the account "Driveline Baseball" (@drivelinebases). The profile picture is a yellow square with a black silhouette of a baseball player. The tweet text reads: "Hey @hoynsie - either you or your source is lying to you about the PITCHf/x gun and #Ubaldogate. kyleboddy.com/2013/04/09/cov... Tagging @MLBastian." Below the text are icons for "Reply", "Retweeted", "Favorite", and "More". At the bottom left, it says "2 RETWEETS" with a small icon of a person and a retweet symbol. The timestamp "10:46 PM - 9 Apr 13" is at the bottom.



Driveline Baseball
@drivelinebases



Following

It is ridiculous that all the Cleveland writers (Hoynes, Bastian, etc) are just ignoring the evidence and making up narratives RE: Ubaldo.

← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More

11:04 PM - 9 Apr 13



Driveline Baseball
@drivelinebases



Following

ICYMI (cough @MLBastian @hoynsie) - someone is covering up Ubaldo's velo loss: kyleboddy.com/2013/04/09/cov...

← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More

2
FAVORITES



12:13 PM - 10 Apr 13



Jordan Bastian @MLBastian

10 Apr

@drivelinebases Saw post. Interesting. All I can say is Paul wouldn't report something if he didn't trust source. I didn't have same info.

Details



Driveline Baseball
@drivelinebases



Following

Hey @hoynsie, why did my comment on your blog with link back to the article get deleted?

Reply Retweet Favorite More

1

RETWEET



12:15 PM - 10 Apr 13



paul hoynes @hoynsie
@drivelinebases no idea.
Details

21h



Driveline Baseball @drivelinebases
@hoynsie Any comment on the post/data I provided?
Correction/retraction? Talk to your source?
Details

20h

