



The Indians took a second straight from the A's behind an exceptional performance by Zach McAllister. In today's B-List, Buff makes a bold pronouncement that is almost certainly temporary, lauds the comedic value of the Oakland defense, wonders about the genealogy of Yan Gomes, welcomes back a formidable foe, and can't even come up with a lie about the Seattle GM that is more damning than the truth. He also thinks that Jason Kipnis' skills with a bat are better than those with his feet.

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The B-List: 5/7

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Sunday, May 05 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Thursday, May 09 2013 9:54 PM

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Indians (16-14)

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W: McAllister (3-3)

L: Milone (3-4)

S: C. Perez (4)

Do you think George Ramsey will ever have to pay for his meal at McDonald's again?

1) Bigger Z

It's time.

We can hem and haw and talk about sample sizes, but the time has come.

Zach McAllister is currently Cleveland's best starting pitcher.

Does McAllister have the best "stuff" on the staff? He does not. Masterson throws harder. Jimenez has more movement. Bauer has a better slider. Kazmir is more left-handed. McAllister's fastball, which he throws a vast majority of the time (over 70%, I believe) sometimes has a nice "tail" on it, moving away from left-handed hitters, but generally speaking, McAllister makes his living with above-average location and a good feel for changing the hitter's eye level. He does a particularly good job of locating the fastball on the outer half to right-handers. His fastball does have a bit of late life, and he spots his non-fastballs well. (I'm not great at identifying pitches: it looks like McAllister has a tight slider and a usable offspeed pitch.)

But over six starts, McAllister has never given up a 4th earned run, has never given up a 7th hit, and in four of the starts has walked either 1 or 0 batters. Last night, McAllister gave up 5 singles and a walk in 7 2/3 innings before ceding the mound to Rich Hill with a runner on first. His ERA peaked this season at 3.52, which would be second on the team for players with more than one start. Currently, it sits at 2.63, which DOES lead the team for players who have made ANY starts. His WHIP of 1.12 leads the starters, and his K/9 rate of 6.69 is ... well, it's okay.

It's 5

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on the starting staff, but that's not McAllister's "thing," really. His thing is that few guys reach base, and guys don't hit the ball real hard (.139 ISO), and his average start is 6-plus innings with a baserunner an inning and 2 earned runs allowed.

McAllister retired the first seven hitters, and never faced more than four hitters in an inning. Nary an Athletic reached so far as second base. He threw 74 strikes in 111 pitches and generally faced the kind of threat level one receives from the mighty Luxembourg Army, or perhaps a particularly grumpy housecat.

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Now, the “best starting pitcher” designation comes with plenty of provisos and caveats and all that sort of thing. This was his first scoreless outing, and the first time he looked Actually Dominant. If you want Actually Dominant, go check out the Mets highlights, where you can see Matt Harvey make the White Sox look like so many soggy Kleenex. It’s six starts. We use the Earned Run stat because it makes McAllister look better (he’s given up 4 unearned runs, which still count). He has a five-walk game on his 2013 record. He didn’t actually pitch any better than Tom Milone did. But right now, you can say positive things about Zach McAllister’s performance to date that you can’t say about any other Cleveland starter, and for now, that makes him The Best.

2) The sum total of interesting offense in the game

Carlos Santana hit a ground ball toward the hole between first and second. Brandon Moss, who has played first base in 86 of his 363 games, deflected the ball with the aplomb of a top-notch AHL goalie, and it rolled to Eric Sogard. While Milone raced over to cover first, Sogard took the innovative approach of throwing the ball to Nobody Whatsoever, backing up the play, and the ball travelled on a course so foul that catcher Derek Norris had to turn around and chase the ball back to where he was in the first place. A more alert, aggressive, and speedy baserunner could easily have been throw out at third on the play, but Santana alertly (and without speed) stayed at second.

Mike Aviles then advanced Santana all the way to third on a single, and Yan Gomes hit a fly ball to very deep center to score the run. Yes, THE run.

3) Of moderate interest

Ryan Raburn and Jason Kipnis hit doubles.

4) Terror on the Basepaths!

Kipnis took it upon himself to try to Make Something Happen after his double. He carefully

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timed Milone's delivery, picked his spot, and took off for third on a steal attempt.

This might have been more successful had he waited until MILONE ACTUALLY PITCHED THE BALL.

He did not. Milone threw him out at third. Oakland's appeal that Kipnis' baserunning was actually so egregious that he should be counted out *twice* fell on deaf ears.

5) By the way

Nick Swisher singled later in the inning.

6) Check that man's family tree

Is it time to talk about Yan Gomes as the Missing Molina Brother?

In twelve games (nine starts), six baserunners have attempted to steal a base with Gomes behind the plate. FOUR of them were thrown out. When Gomes catches, Cleveland pitchers have a 2.89 ERA.

Last night, Yoenis Cespedes singled off closer Chris Perez, and on a 2-2 count, took off and tried to get into scoring position in a 1-0 game. Gomes threw a ball roughly as hard as Mark Reynolds hits the ball and approximately as straight as a high-tension wire. Had Jason Kipnis stood over top of the bag and dropped the ball into Asdrubal Cabrera's glove, the throw would not have been more accurate.

Yan Yan the Catching Man can't actually hit very well. True, more than half his (7) hits went for extra bases (including a pair of triples!), but the man sported a .264 OBP in limited duty last

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season and has a .229 now. Still, given choice between Gomes' defense and Tofu Lou's ... well ... walks, I guess ... well, right now, I'm thinking Tofu Lou can take his time healing up that shoulder.

7) Credit Where Credit is Due Dept.

Kipnis had two hits on the night, the only player to do so. He is hitting .308 with an OPS over 1.000 in May, which might be the least-meaningful stat I've ever foisted on anyone.

Mike Aviles' hit with Santana on second was the only hit the Tribe had with a RISP. Without that hit, Gomes' fly ball out would simply have been ... a fly ball out.

The Indians 1-for-6 with RISP still dwarfs the A's 0-for-0. Yes, "for zero."

Drew Stubbs led off against the left-handed Milone. Just because it didn't work well doesn't mean it wasn't the right thing to attempt. (Milone really did pitch well.)

8) Columnist's Prerogative

I like watching Pat Neshek pitch. Four of his nine pitches were swinging strikes, although three of those were by Stubbs. I still like that Neshek still pitches in the bigs.

9) Public Service for the Google Search Engine

Jack Zduriencik signed Aaron Harang to pitch for the Mariners because he figured, shoot, Safeco is enormous. Actually, this is probably true, but Harang lost to Jeanmar Gomez anyway, which kind of sums up the Mariners' offense. Fire Eric Wedge.