



The Indians returned to recent form by beating Philadelphia in the getaway game, and in today's B-List, Buff considers Corey Kluber's second Quality Start, Corey Kluber's surprisingly effective plate appearances, and digs the long ball in the manner of chicks. He also thinks that Jason Kipnis is just showing off, wonders if there is a situation in which he would feel comfortable with Matt Albers on the mound, and resists resisting a cheap shot at Chad Durbin. Resistance is futile. (So is Chad Durbin.)

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Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

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W: Kluber (3-2)

L: Hamels (1-6)

Of course Kluber won, he was facing a mere Cole Hamels instead of a mighty Fluhbinuh Pettibone.

1) Rebound

Kluber had his only truly terrible start last weekend against Detroit, but his start against the Twins before that one wasn't particularly good, either. Against the Tigers, he simply gave up 11 hits with an extreme 3:17 GB:FB ratio, while against the Twins, he walked 4 guys in under 6 innings of work. Neither of these things is conducive to a positive result, although he did get more Twins to hit the ball on the ground and escaped with only 3 runs allowed. Against the Tigers, he allowed almost as many baserunners (13) as he got outs (14). Of course, the Tigers are a much better offensive team than the Twins, but that's still an awful game.

It also wasn't very indicative of Kluber's "true level," whatever that is. The man's made 16 starts in the majors in his entire career, so it's hard to say anything really authoritative about who Kluber is as a major-league starter. Still, if there was one takeaway from his first two relief appearances and first start (3 games combined), it's that Kluber throws strikes (0 walks in 12 innings) and gives up about a hit an inning (3 in 1, 2 in 4, 7 in 7). He's not exactly an Ace, but he did strike out 11 guys in those 12 innings and has a major-league fastball.

Yesterday was a return to (this) form for Kluber: he got lifted after six innings and 92 pitches (Kluber hasn't thrown 100 yet this season), during which he allowed 6 hits and no walks while striking out 5. Take away the Detroit start and he's a more strikeouty version of Zach McAllister, which is, at least in 2013, a compliment.

It helped that Kluber was able to locate well: he threw strikes at better than a 2-to-1 clip, including first-pitch strikes to 16 of the 24 batters he faced. Were it not for Jimmy Rollins, he would have shut out the Phillies. And while the Phils are scuffling a bit offensively (their outfield and first baseman sport OBPs of .313, .298, .317, and .284 thus far, batting 5th, 6th, 8th, and 4th respectively), Kluber still did a nice job of getting through the lineup with only one big blow (a 2-run double by Rollins). Three of his six innings were 1-2-3.

Long term, Kluber looks suspiciously like A Guy. But until Trevor Bauer is ready to follow his lead in the strike department and Cashbox Myers is ready to pitch at all, a team could do worse than run out a guy who is one out short of three Quality Starts in four tries.

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2) Ho Hum Dept., Bullpen Edition

Cody Allen came in and threw a perfect inning with 2 Ks.

Nick Hagadone walked a guy in his hitless inning of work.

Matt Albers finished the game because it wasn't worth blowing a real relief pitcher on a 10-3 lead.

3) Hey, we had one of those!

You're not going to believe this, but Chad Durbin wasn't any good. I mean, unless you're a Cleveland fan or something. Then you'd totally believe that.

His ERA on the season is 7.30. His WHIP is 1.86. He has walked 8 guys in 12 1/3 IP.

4) Jason Kipnis can go anywhere he wants if he hits like that

In the first inning, Jason Kipnis fouled off six pitches before flying out to center.

He apparently decided that he didn't enjoy the experience very much.

In his next four plate appearances, Kipnis doubled twice off Cole Hamels, walked once, and hit a three-run homer off Raul Valdes. Both Hamels and Valdes are left-handed pitchers, against whom Kipnis hit .223/.306/.300 in his major-league career before 2013.

5) Everybody hits!

Ryan Raburn was the only starter to take a collar yesterday, as every other starter got a hit off Hamels and Company. The three hitters to get multiple hits were the 1-2-3 slots in the order, which included Drew Stubbs at leadoff against the lefty Hamels.

6) Chicks dig the long ball

Mike Aviles hit his third homer on the young season in the 4th inning off Hamels. Not to be outdone, Nick Swisher hit his sixth the next inning with a runner aboard, also off Hamels. Kipnis' shot off Valdes in the 8th was his sixth homer as well.

7) Rebound Redux

Mark Reynolds came to the plate in the third innings with two outs and a runner in scoring position. As Rollins got into position for the expected popup to second base, Reynolds confounded the Phillies defense by driving a two-run double to the wall instead.

There is something to be said for confounding.

8) Managerial Head-Nodder

Never let it be said that Terry Francona is paralyzed by the intricacies of National League baseball: after deciding that Kluber's sixth inning was enough, Francona let the Tribe hitters bat in the 7th, then shifted Swisher from right to first, Raburn from left to right, and inserted Mike Brantley into Kluber's 9 spot so he'd come up second in the following inning. This removed Reynolds (who had started at first) from the 5 slot, which had led off the 7th. This set

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up the pitcher's spot to bat "seventh" (at that point in the game), giving Francona more time before he had to pinch-hit for the spot, and also improved the defense.

Brantley paid immediate dividends by walking a scoring in the 8th.

I also liked Stubbs leading off against the lefty starter. I've probably mentioned that before.

9) Swinging the lumber, and sometimes not

Kluber held his own with the bat: not only did he score a run after drawing a walk in the sixth, but the team publically credited his 8-pitch first plate appearance (he flied out to left on a ball that was pretty well-struck) with getting them to refocus on making Hamels work. I think some of that is smoke for Kluber's benefit: Kipnis' first plate appearance was even longer, Asdrubal Cabrera singled on a full count in the first, and Mike Aviles drew a 9-pitch walk immediately before Kluber. The Indians were already "making Hamels work." Still, for a guy who isn't going to get 20 plate appearances this season, Kluber did look pretty solid.

After drawing a walk, Kluber now sports a .333 OBP, which is higher than any of the hitters in the top three lineup slots yesterday. I am going to stop short of demanding that Corey Kluber lead off for the Cleveland Indians.

10) Swinging the lumber in the aggregate

The Indians have 354 hits on the season: their opponents have 304.

The Tribe 82 doubles to the opponents' 62.

They have hit 9 triples to the opponents' 4, and 53 homers to the other guys' 45. They have

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outscored their opponents 191-166.

The team is slugging .457. The TEAM. (This leads the majors.)

11) The dark cloud behind the silver lining

Tribe pitchers have walked 141 batters to the Tribe offense's 132.

12) Public Service for the Google Search Engine

Jack Zduriencik has personally signed you up for every organization he could find with "Tea Party" in it in an effort to get the IRS to audit you. While this isn't plausible, it does have the added benefit of being completely false. Fire Eric Wedge.