



Long ago, in a galaxy far, far away, a boy with a lightning scar met up with a duck from outer space and went to look for the missing idol with his best friend, who was a vampire with golden eyes who could not act, and they unleashed a box of snakes on a plane while flying through a hole into the 10th dimension with their handy oscillation overthruster, and none of this is remotely as absurd as Cleveland winning yesterday.

FINAL

1

2

3

4

5

6

The B-List: 5/20

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Tuesday, May 21 2013 1:17 PM - Last Updated Tuesday, May 21 2013 3:09 PM

7

8

9

10

R

H

E

Mariners (20-25)

2

0

2

1

The B-List: 5/20

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Tuesday, May 21 2013 1:17 PM - Last Updated Tuesday, May 21 2013 3:09 PM

0

0

0

1

1

1

3

12

3,472

Indians (26-17)

0

The B-List: 5/20

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Tuesday, May 21 2013 1:17 PM - Last Updated Tuesday, May 21 2013 3:09 PM

[4

[1

[0

[0

[0

[1

[0

[1

[3

[10

[11

[0

“W”: J. Smiff (2-0) L: Furbush (0-3)

[Beet juice](#) !

1) Howard the Duck

So, it's probably true that Scott Kazmir is not the guy who coughed up 6 runs and a pair of taters to the lowly Houston Astros, and it's *clearly* true that he's not the guy who struck out 10 Athletics in a 6-inning 1-run performance May 9th

. Those represent his boundaries, not his expectations. What Scott Kazmir appears to be, more than anything, is a guy with a really low margin of error.

Obviously Kazmir has excellent raw “stuff:” you don't strike out 10 guys in 6 innings, even Oakland Athletics, without “stuff.” Sure, Phil Humber threw a perfect game and is now unemployed and I know all about blind squirrels, but just watching Kazmir pitch well is enough to convince me that his stuff is real. It's just that he doesn't always have THAT stuff. And the difference between THAT stuff and the ASTROS stuff is pretty hard to discern by a layman, except insofar as his pitch location is much better in one and much lousier in the other.

While yesterday's start wasn't quite as Houstonian levels (he didn't give up any home runs, for example), it was still pretty dismal. Of Kazmir's 7 hits allowed, 3 were for extra bases (doubles) and his five runs allowed came honestly. He just wasn't any good. His two walks weren't any good. Two of the three doubles came on 2-0 counts. He allowed as many baserunners as he recorded outs. It was his second pretty bad start (and “pretty bad” is meant to encompass his last start, not this one, which was way left of “pretty bad”) in a row, and mostly for the same reason: he didn't command his stuff worth a Vice Presidency.

Are the Indians *depending* on Scott Kazmir to be successful this season? Well, yes and no. With the surge of Zach McAllister and the breath-holding express that is Ubaldo Jimenez, Kazmir is the de facto fourth starter right now. Arguably, he'd slot fifth behind Cashbox Myers,

but I will have to see Myers pitch well to give him that benefit of the doubt. I hesitate to put Corey Kluber ahead of Kazmir in the pecking order.

It *does* take five guys (at a time) to get through the 162-game season, and trotting out a feast-or-famine option every fifth day isn't the best recipe. On the other hand, it's a tenable position if you consider that slot to be a guy you hope "holds his own" and generally goes about .500. I've seen three poor games and three very good ones from Kazmir, which fits that bill so far. He's not a guy I feel sanguine about trying to stop a three-game slide or anything, because thus far it really is Jekyll or Hyde and nothing really in between. But to suck up starts with a 50-50 shot of giving you a Quality Start? I mean, were we really expecting Cliff Lee to walk through that door?

2) The Hong Kong Cavaliers

With Kazmir flaming out in the 4th inning (he walked Kelly Shoppach on five pitches, gave up a full-count double to Robert Andino, who is now hitting .186/.250/.243, and got the merciful wazoo he so richly deserved), Terry Francona was forced to dig into his arsenal of Just Some Guys to eat the innings until the Big Guns could blow the game. To this end, he called on Matt Albers and Brian Shaw to saw up a pair of innings apiece.

Let's not mince words: Albers has been desperately mediocre thus far. He's allowed a hit an inning, which isn't awful, but has walked 9 guys in 14 1/3 IP, which really is. His ERA of 3.77 is kind of a by-product of what ERA means for relief pitchers: it's 14 innings. His WHIP of 1.60 is more indicative of a guy who has limited value thus far.

Yesterday, though, Albers was terrific: he did allow Shoppach to score, but on a routine groundout to short. He got another ground out, Yan Gomes gunned down a base stealer, and he struck out two guys swinging in his second inning of work. Yes, he allowed a double to Kendry Morales, but those two Ks came with Morales standing on second, and it was generally a good outing.

Shaw was even better: he struck out two guys swinging in his first (perfect) inning, and after a leadoff single, got a bunt popped up, watched Yan Gomes be awesome, and finished off the inning with a third swinging K.

The B-List: 5/20

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Tuesday, May 21 2013 1:17 PM - Last Updated Tuesday, May 21 2013 3:09 PM

Without these four innings, Cleveland isn't even in the position to win and lose and tie and lose and tie and lose and win the game.

3) Ron Weasley

Vinnie Pestano came in to protect a fresh 6-5 lead and promptly gave up a leadoff homer to Kyle Seager. I'm loathe to draw any great conclusions about Pestano returning from a stint on the DL or declaring him anything, but that isn't any good.

He did get the next three batters out. He started none of the four batters with a first-pitch strike. Throw strikes!

4) Ron Weasley

Given the ball in a 6-6 tie in the 9th inning and facing pinch-hitter Endy Chavez, whose power approximates that of a crystal radio (look it up, kids), Chris Perez left a fastball over the plate and Chavez gristled it over the wall to give the Mariners a 7-6 lead.

This marks the second straight crummy outing by Perez, although he was rewarded with the win last time, and it wasn't even AS crummy. He only gave up one homer, after all. He did walk two guys later in the inning before escaping. Throw strikes!

What's interesting to me about Perez' fastball (and I am on record as saying that I think his slider is a much, much better pitch) is the amount of arm-side movement it has. While the pitch Chavez hit out was elevated, it sure wasn't straight. I'm not worried about Perez long term.

(Perez was in a better mood in the postgame interviews, it should be noted.)

5) Ron Weasley

After getting two quick outs (including a swinging K) and generally being Joe Effing Smiff, Smiff allowed Justin Smoak to hit a ball just about as far as any ball Justin Smoak has ever hit at any level ever and the Indians once again fell behind 8-7 in the 10th.

Joe Smiff threw 11 of his 12 pitches for strikes.

6) Neville Longbottom

With one out in the bottom of the 9th and the Indians trailing 7-6, Jason Kipnis hit a ball to second baseman Robert Andino, who made a nice stop on the ball, but was unable to get an accurate throw to Smoak and Kipnis beat it out for an infield single. After a K by Asdrubal Cabrera, Nick Swisher raked a single to right on the first pitch.

Carlos Santana then took a strike from Mariners' closer Tom Wilhelmsen, who has simply been nails this season. Wilhelmsen's ERA is 0.47. And, true to form, he got Santana to ground to Smoak's right, so Smoak simply tossed the ball underhand to Wilhelmsen covering first, and the game was ...

... not over, because Wilhelmsen simply dropped the ball.

Well, I wouldn't say "simply." Covering first isn't a trivial play for a pitcher. You have to concentrate on running to first, avoiding the baserunner, catching the ball, and stepping on the bag. The good news: Wilhelmsen did indeed step on the bag.

(Wilhelmsen did not display good footwork near the bag, nor good concentration handballing the threw into short right.)

7) Qui-Gon Jinn

With two outs and the Indians down 2-0, Ryan Raburn fouled off a 1-2 pitch, then hammered a Hisashi Iwakuma offering 400-plus feet over the left field wall to give the Tribe a 3-2 lead. He never did anything else in the game, but dude ... three-run homer! Don't get greedy, man.

Note that Iwakuma came into the game as a dark horse Cy Young candidate, having allowed no more than 3 runs in any of his previous 9 starts and entered the game with a 1.84 ERA. His WHIP, even after allowing 7 hits and 3 walks to the Tribe, is 0.87. He has failed to complete the 6th inning exactly once this season (his only loss). His K:BB ratio is 61:11 in 64 2/3 IP. He's been really, really good. Perhaps the Tribe thought he already HAD won a Cy Young.

8) Yan Gomes

I cannot think of a fantasy movie character whose story is more uplifting and less plausible than that of Yan Gomes, pride of Sao Paolo, Brazil. After Raburn's homer, Gomes lifted a ball of his own to the Home Run Porch in left to give the Indians a 4-2 lead.

But wait, there's more! With two outs in the 4th and the speedy Mike Saunders on first, Saunders took off on a 1-0 pitch (which was a strike) and threw Saunders out with a laser to Cabrera.

But wait, there's more! With Brendan Ryan on first in the 7th, Jason Bay swung through a 1-1 pitch, and Gomes again dropped the ball right into position for the easy tag out as Ryan was cut down for the second out. (Bay then struck out on the next pitch.)

But wait, there's more! After a leadoff single by Mike Brantley, Drew Stubbs dropped down a sacrifice bunt as the Tribe was trailing 8-7. However, the throw to first was adroitly dropped by Wickets Smoak, who is looking from this series like the first-base answer to Jesus Montero, and now runners at first and second awaited Young Yan.

With the top of the order coming up, it made sense to put both guys into scoring position, so Gomes attempted to sacrifice. Charlie Furbush missed the zone three times, and Gomes missed the ball twice, so the bunt was off on a full count. Furbush' pitch was low and in. It was probably ball four.

It was not ball four.

Three hundred ninety-four feet later, Yan Gomes had his second home run of the game, and the Indians won 10-8.

Yan Gomes now leads the team in slugging percentage (.642) and OPS (.951). Your "small sample size" can go perform anatomically unlikely actions.

(By the way, two Mariners DID steal successfully, but on the season, Gomes has thrown out 6 of 10 base stealers. His time from catch to the bag was timed by "Baseball Tonight" at 1.82 and 1.83 seconds on the two caught stealings. A decent time for a catcher is 2.00 seconds.)

9) Sir Not Appearing in this Film

Tofu Lou Marson's shoulder is probably not feeling better today.

10) Public Service for the Google Search Engine

Jack Zduriencik is an immortal vampire with golden eyes and a set of emotions that runs the gamut from "calm" to "sleepy." In fact, I have seen Zduriencik show more emotion than Robert Pattinson and Whatshername Whosits combined, his eyes are not golden, and the statement is completely false. Fire Eric Wedge.