



This Indians shook off the disappointment of dropping two to the Tigers and made Terry Francona's return to Boston that much more enjoyable with a 12-3 shellacking of the BoSox, and in today's B-List, Buff looks at the continued success of Zach McAllister, lauds Scott Barnes' first career save, considers whether offensive star Drew Stubbs is a net asset, and points out an occurrence that is as rare as a Yan Gomes triple. He also takes what he hopes are his final cheap shots at David Huff. Godspeed, Mr. Huff.

FINAL

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The B-List: 5/23

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Tuesday, May 21 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Sunday, May 26 2013 10:51 AM

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The B-List: 5/23

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Tuesday, May 21 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Sunday, May 26 2013 10:51 AM

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Red Sox (28-20)

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Tuesday, May 21 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Sunday, May 26 2013 10:51 AM

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W: McAllister (4-3) L: Dempster (2-5) S: Barnes (1)

Thomas Wolfe would appear to have been mistaken.

0) Administrative Notes

The column from Tuesday's game would have been short:

Max Scherzer was really, really good.

Miguel Cabrera is really, really good.

Corey Kluber was pretty good, but he's not as good as Miguel Cabrera, which is kind of like saying, "You know, my car goes pretty fast, but not as fast as a photon."

The column from Wednesday's game would have been longer, but a lot more angry. It would have involved the juxtaposition of "David Huff" and "Why?!" a lot. I mean a *lot*. A lot more than was called for or justifiable. A

lot

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1) Ho Hum Dept.

Stop me if you've heard this one before: Zach McAllister pitched and gave up a hit an inning while holding the opponent to three runs.

(insert you stopping me here)

Was McAllister "super sharp" or "ultra dominant?" He was not. He walked three guys, one of whom scored, and threw 61 of 96 pitches for strikes. He gave up a *titanic* home run to David Ortiz, who is apparently not dead, although equally apparently you may not ask if an affirmed PED-user is using PEDs this season. And at least partially because he walked three and struck out five, his pitch count got him lifted after his fifth inning, which is tied for his shortest outing (and WAS his fewest "batters faced") of the year.

On the other hand, he had a 6-3 lead after his fifth inning of work which ballooned into a 12-3

lead by the time he would have pitched again and there wasn't really any point in doing more than he did, which was fine. You could argue that he was One Correct Guess by Ortiz away from five shutout innings, since he retired the next six hitters, walked a guy, and got the next two outs to complete his night. That is, he didn't give up another hit after Ortiz' blast and had only one baserunner of any type.

There are still reasonable questions to ask about McAllister: he's still a bit of a fly ball pitcher without consistent strikeout stuff. He struck out 5 in 5 this time but only 1 in 7 1/3 last time. And while these are obviously very small samples, that's all there ARE with McAllister. Still, it says something that after Ortiz homered in the third, I literally said to myself that McAllister wouldn't give up another run because, well, he never gives up a fourth run.

He didn't give up a fourth run.

Interestingly, McAllister's 2.42 ERA in May is nearly a full run lower than his 3.30 in April despite a higher AVG allowed (.247 to .231), a worse K:BB ratio (15:8 vs 24:9), more hits per start (6 to 5.6) and more walks per start (2 to 1.8). But he's been awfully valuable this season.

2) Welcome back back!

Scott Barnes picked up his first career save by Wes Littletoning through 3 scoreless innings. Barnes has been on the Jensen Lewis Yo-Yo this season, this time replacing a feckless David Huff because David Huff is a schmendrick. Huff gave up two runs in 1/3 IP on Tuesday and 3 runs in 1 IP on Wednesday and was Designated for the Wazoo on Thursday. I fully intend to never write anything about David Huff again, even if he clears waivers and returns to the Indians and pitches the Tribe to victory in the 7th game of the 2022 World Series. He has become my Jason Davis of the 'teens.

Anyway, Barnes pitched very well, not simply padding his stats with a big lead. Two of his three innings were perfect, and all four of his strikeouts were swinging. He gave up a pair of hits in the 8th, but after each hit got the next guy to strike out and retired the final batter with runners on 2nd and 3rd.

Is Barnes the answer to our left-handed reliever prayers? That seems a little premature. His last six innings covering three outings have been terrific, striking out 8, walking 1, and allowing 2 hits (both last night). His first outing (1 inning) was disastrous. So is the life of a low-sample reliever. The good news is that he appears to be more of a “relief pitcher that throws left-handed” than a “left-handed relief specialist.” While the samples are truly pitifully-sized, he doesn’t have much of a platoon split yet, holding righties to a .154 AVG and .497 OPS while lefties sport a .091 AVG and .530 OPS. Before this year, he did have a pronounced split, but I’d still be okay with him taking full innings rather than having to be “matched up.”

He has the additional benefits of being neither Rich Hill nor David Huff, and on this team, that goes kind of a long way.

I expect him to be sent back to Columbus when (someone) does (something). While he’s here, I don’t mind. (I also don’t expect him to pitch for a couple of days after a 41-pitch airing out.)

3) Ho Hum Dept. Revisited

Cody Allen struck out two of the three hitters he faced in a perfect inning of work. In Allen’s last six appearances, covering 6 complete innings, he has allowed one hit and one walk. He has eleven strikeouts in that span.

In April, Allen posted a 2.38 ERA with 5 walks, 15 Ks, and a .239 AVG allowed. In May, his ERA has been 1.69 with 2 walks, 15 Ks, and a .118 AVG allowed. Assuming linear progression, Allen will walk negative one hitter in June while holding opponents to a -.003 AVG. Oddly enough, he will still have a 1.00 ERA.

4) Big Game Drew

The offensive star of the game last night was the #9 hitter, Drew Stubbs. All three of Stubbs hits went for extra bases, and two of them produced runs as Stubbs led the team with 3 RBI. Both of Stubbs’ RBI hits came when he was behind in the count.

While Stubbs may hit ninth in the order, serving the dual purpose of putting a weaker hitter in the 9 slot and potentially having a “second leadoff man” there because Stubbs is fast in the classical sense, it’s worth asking as to whether he is a net asset. He’s certainly better than the “fungus” I declared him in April: this was obviously premature. It’s a huge step up from his dismal 2012. It’s pretty similar to his 2011, which was simultaneously “not very good” (.243/.321/.364, 205 Ks) and “not too bad” (1.6 WAR, good defense in right). He’s running at about a 1.0 WAR clip thus far, which would be even better, and I (and the pitching staff) certainly have no complaints about his RF play. Compared to Shin-Soo Choo, Stubbs kind of IS an OFFENSIVE fungus, but a DEFENSIVE *genius*.

I guess that’s where the calculus gets murky: how much outfield defense is necessary to overcome what is, all things considered, still a substandard corner-outfield bat? WAR tries to address this by rolling in defense, but no one is very excited by the metrics used to calculate defensive value. Stubbs’ line of .255/.304/.403 isn’t exactly awful, in that it’s comparable to, say, Asdrubal Cabrera’s or Jason Kipnis’, who bat 3rd and 2nd respectively. It’s just that Cabrera has enough of a track record for us to expect his OBP or .309 to rise another 30 points (at least) and Kipnis has more pedigree: this kind of IS who Drew Stubbs IS. While you’d like your right fielder to hit better than this, you probably don’t expect as much from your #9 hitter.

Right now, the evaluation is working in Stubbs’ favor. He actually hit .271/.301/.457 in May, and while that OBP is bad, the rest of it is not. And as I said, with Kluber and McAllister and Kazmir (and Bauer, to a certain extent) allowing more balls to be lifted into the OF, having Stubbs and Bourn covering that part of the field is a valuable thing. Regardless, banging out two doubles and a triple in Fenway is an awfully good night.

5) Everybody hits!

Stubbs might have had the MOST noteworthy night at the plate, but it should be noted that EVERY Cleveland starter banged out at least one hit, and each of them besides Jason Kipnis scored a run. Mike Bourn and Mark Reynolds joined Stubbs in the Three Hit Club, Cabrera has two hits, and Carlos Santana actually reached base FIVE TIMES thanks in part to four walks. This was the first time Reynolds had three singles in a game since ... well, look, I have no idea, but he hadn’t done it to this point with the Tribe.

6) Nice Hose!

After generally praising Stubbs' defense above, it seems ironic that the one player to make an outstanding throw last night was Mike Bourn, who cut down Jacoby Ellsbury in the third trying to score from second on a single by Dustin Pedroia. Oh, by the way, Ortiz homered on the next pitch.

7) Ducks on the pond!

Well, look: yes, the Indians left 11 men on base last night, but they scored 12 runs. They had 24 baserunners, for Pete's sake. They hit 8-for-19 with runners in scoring position and collected a pair of 2-out RBI. Move along.

8) Emperor's New Clothes Dept.

Yan Gomes drove in his 11th and 12th runs of the season with his third double and is now hitting .311 with a .672 SLG. Gomes was given a reprieve when ersatz first baseman Mike Napoli dropped his popup in foul territory to continue the plate appearance.

But perhaps more impressively, Gomes drew his second walk of the season, meaning that in 64 plate appearances, Gomes now has as many walks as he has TRIPLES.

I love the Saga of Yan Gomes and his arm is tremendous and his power is legit and Hooray for Yan, but ... well ... let's just say that Gomes fouled off three 3-2 pitches before walking, and his game-winning three-run homer Monday was on a pitch about a net foot out of the strike zone. It is hard to walk Yan Gomes.

9) Wait, what?

Did you realize Bob Phelps was back on the team? I didn't realize Bob Phelps was back on the team. I suppose this is a "Nick Swisher Paternity Leave" thing.

He did not get a hit.

10) Public Service for the Google Search Engine

Jack Zduriencik is expected to place a waiver claim on David Huff and plans to convert him to catcher to replace Jesus Montero. This is more "wishful thinking" on my part than "actual truth" and the statement simultaneously makes no sense and is false. Fire Eric Wedge.