



The Indians took two of three from the reeling Washington Nationals, depending on a pair of two-run outbursts to overcome the punchless Washington offense. In today's B-List, Buff compares and contrasts the performances of Justin Masterson and Corey Kluber, who were both outstanding. He mentions Scott Kazmir's performance, which, while standing out, was ironically not "outstanding." He cheers Jason Kipnis as the new standard of baserunning while pointing out his baserunning wasn't even the best on his own team this weekend.

FINAL

[1

[2

[3

[4

[5

[6

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

[7

[8

[9

[R

[H

[E

Natinals (33-33)

[0

[0

[1

[0

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

0

0

0

0

0

1

2

0

Indians (33-33)

0

0

0

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

1

0

0

0

0

1

2

7

0

W: J. Smiff (3-0)

L: Abad (0-1)

FINAL

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

[1

[2

[3

[4

[5

[6

[7

[8

[9

[R

[H

[E

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

Nationals (34-33)

2

1

2

0

0

0

0

1

1

7

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

8

0

Indians (33-34)

0

0

1

2

3

0

0

0

0

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

[6]

[9]

[3]

W: Storen (1-1)

L: Pestano (1-2)

S: R. Soriano (18)

FINAL

[1]

[2]

[3]

[4]

[5]

[6]

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

[7

[8

[9

[R

[H

[E

Natinals (34-34)

[0

[p

[0

[p

[0

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

0

0

0

0

0

7

1

Indians (34-34)

0

0

0

The B-List: 6/14 - 6/16

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 14 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 19 2013 8:39 AM

1

0

0

0

1

X

2

4

2

W: Kluber (5-4)

L: Strasburg (3-6)

S: Pestano (1)

Well, one has to conclude that those teams are pretty evenly-matched, no?

1) Compare and Contrast, but mostly Compare

Who pitched better this weekend, Justin Masterson or Corey Kluber?

Well, let's get the obvious out of the way immediately: they both pitched extremely well. Masterson allowed 6 baserunners, Kluber 7. Masterson went 7 innings and threw 71 strikes in 113 pitches, while Kluber went 8 innings and threw 73 strikes in 114 pitches. Both men induced a glorious number of swings-and-misses: Masterson 17, Kluber 19. Each struck out at least a guy an inning: Masterson 10, Kluber 8. They each got 3 more ground ball outs than fly ball outs (7:4 vs. 9:6), and nary an opposing hitter drove in a run. Masterson held the Nats to 0-for-3 with runners in scoring position, while Kluber throttled Washington to the tune of 2-for-11, and one of those "hits" was a sacrifice bunt that was good enough to be a hit. At the end of the series, Masterson, the nominal staff Ace, sports a respectable 3.52 ERA, while Kluber, the nominal staff filler, stands at 3.58. Masterson has struck out 102 batters in 102 1/3 innings. Kluber has struck out 65 batters in 65 1/3 innings. Masterson's WHIP is 1.18, which is also Kluber's WHIP. Kluber's beard is more impressive. Masterson's height and weight are more voluminous.

If there's one stat from the weekend that helps illustrate that the pitchers are, in fact, not the same person, it would be the fact that Kluber's seven baserunners were all the products of base hits, while Masterson allowed only two hits but four walks. This is consistent with their season-to-date data as well: Masterson gives up significantly fewer than a hit an inning, but walks more than 3.6 batters per 9 innings. In contrast, Kluber is very stingy with walks (about 1.65 per 9 IP), but gives up almost exactly a hit an inning. A walk's only as good as a hit in terms of getting on base, so Masterson's WHIP is probably a little more impressive, but at the same time, that's too many walks.

And it cuts to the heart of the other part of Masterson's inaccuracy: the Washington run scored when Masterson walked the leadoff hitter, gave up a single, the Nats sacrificed the runners to second and third, and after ANOTHER walk, Masterson uncorked his 6th wild pitch of the season to allow his only run. In 2010, Masterson hit 11 batters and tossed 12 wild pitches: those numbers were 11 and 5 in 2011 and 13 and 14 in 2012. He's already hit 8 guys this season, meaning he's "on pace" for a similar level of blunderbussery in 2013.

Of course, plunkings and catcher jogs aren't in and of themselves terrible deal-breaking phenomena. After throwing the wild pitch to Ryan Zimmerman to let in the run, Masterson's next four pitches were:

Strike (swinging)
Strike (looking, K)
Strike (swinging)
Strike (groundout to 1st, end of inning)

And this was all with runners on 2nd and 3rd. I already said in the initial paragraphs that Masterson pitched a great game. The fact he didn't collect the win is partially his fault (the wild pitch), but mostly not (the mostly-inept Cleveland offense shoulders more blame).

But it does go to show the primary difference between Masterson and Kluber: movement. Masterson's ball flies all over the place. Guys swing at it and miss. Guys try to time it and fail. His 1.18 WHIP would be a career low, and that includes his stint as a reliever, where guys usually have better numbers because they can simply "air it out." He's holding opposing hitters to a .216/.306/.313 batting line that would be nearly 100 points better in terms of OPS allowed than his career average. This is easily his best season.

Of course, it's Kluber's best season, too, but that's because his data sample is puny. His lovely WHIP and ERA almost seem fortunate given his .262/.304/.419 opposing batting line. And sure enough, there were two innings in which Kluber got out of situations with a bit of good fortune: the obvious one was the 7th, in which the Nats loaded the bases with nobody out and Jhonatan Solano lined a ball to Mark Reynolds at first, who doubled off the baserunner. But he also got a fortuitous double-play grounder in the 6th with runners on the corners. It should be noted that it's not all luck with Kluber: with runners on the corners in the 4th

, he simply struck out the side, and he had struck out Zimmerman swinging before the inning-ending double play in the 6th

. Kluber's stuff will play. There's some good fortune involved, though.

At the end of the weekend, no one will argue much because the Tribe won both games. But if I'm answering the question originally posed, I'll go with Masterson. This doesn't take anything away from Kluber, who matched up with Steven Strasburg and came out on top. But hey, Gio Gonzalez (Masterson's opponent) is (and was) no slouch.

2) The Tao of Scott, revisited

Passage 78:

There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, except for Scott Kazmir's fastball.

Seriously, four walks, three homers, 2 2/3 IP ... ptui! Note: this outing caused Kazmir's ERA to rise ... a half a run.

3) At least they were both bad at the same time

On Friday night, Joe Smiff entered a tie game in the 9th inning and recorded three outs in a perfect frame without allowing the ball to be hit out of the infield.

On Sunday, Vinnie Pestano recorded his first save of the season filling in for the injured Chris Perez, allowing one walk but no hits.

In between, of course, the two combined to blow a 6-5 lead by each allowing a two-out solo homer. Smiff allowed a homer to Chad Tracy, who entered the game hitting .131/.172/.180. Pestano allowed his blast to Anthony Rendon, who was born in the '90s. Asked to evaluate the quality of this best-laid plan, I would opine that it was one of those belonging to mice.

4) More mileage from famine than feast

The Indians scored two runs on Friday and won.

The Indians scored two runs on Sunday and won easily. Each of the two runs scored with the benefit of exactly one hit (walk, steal, error, single; double, bunt, sac fly).

The Indians scored six runs on Saturday, EACH of which was driven in with TWO OUTS. For this clutch performance, the Tribe was rewarded with a loss.

5) Terror on the Basepaths!

Is it time to consider Jason Kipnis Cleveland's most dangerous baserunning threat? On Friday, Kipnis stole his 15th base of the season after drawing a walk from Steven Strasburg, and when Solano's throw sailed into center, Kipnis alertly advanced to third, where he could score on Carlos Santana's single up the middle on a pitch that may have been four inches off the ground. He was picked off for his 5th "caught stealing" on Saturday, but a 15:5 SB:CS ratio is still acceptable and his 15 steals lead the team by a significant margin (only Mike Bourn's 10 are in double figures: the next-highest total is Drew Stubbs' 6). The Indians have a 50-to-36 edge in stolen bases over their opponents thus far this season.

Bourn did steal his 10th base of the season Friday night, although it went for naught.

And Yan Gomes ... Yan Gomes! ... stole his first base of the season Sunday. I'm sorry I missed that.

But the baserunning play of the weekend came courtesy of Drew Stubbs: after lacing a one-out single off Ferd Abad in the bottom of the 9th, Stubbs took third on a single by Bourn, then took off on Kipnis' hard smash to first. Since first baseman Adam LaRoche was playing in, he had to dive across his body to snare the shot, and his throw home came from his knees and Stubbs beat it to score the winning run. Of course, it was brilliant at least partially because it worked out, but the fact is, Stubbs was safe because he committed early and has good speed, and we won the game because of it.

6) Captains Clutch

As noted earlier, all six of Cleveland's runs Saturday scored with two outs. The following players contributed two-out RBI: Santana (homer), Mark Reynolds (homer), Kipnis, Nick Swisher, and Mike Brantley (2).

The only run the Tribe managed off Gio Gonzalez came off the bat of Ryan Raburn, who drilled an opposite-field homer in the 4th. It came with two outs.

7) Ducks on the pond!

My family has several Nationals fans, and they lamented that they hit 0-for-3, 0-for-5, and 2-for-11 with runners in scoring position this weekend.

I didn't understand what they meant. That's what teams ALWAYS hit with runners in scoring position. Isn't it? I mean, I've been watching the Tribe for a long time, and those numbers seem perfectly normal to me.

(Indians: 1-for-7, 3-for-7, 1-for-2)

8) Dept. of Consistent Output

Two players got a hit in each of the three games: Carlos Santana, with a 1-for-2 with 2 walks, 1-for-4 with a homer, and 1-for-4 with an RBI single, and Jason Kipnis, with a 2-for-5 outing, a 2-for-3 with a walk, and a 1-for-1 with 2 walks. Kipnis is now hitting a very respectable .270/.342/.465 on the season, while Santana's .287/.387/.486 line is worthy of All-Star consideration. The only other Tribe player with an OBP over .340 who is still on the team is Ryan Raburn. (Zeq Carrera's .500 OBP is not included because he is a Phillie and because he blows.)

9) Around the Bullpen

Matt Albers, Brian Shaw, Cody Allen, and Cody Allen (yes, Cody Allen twice) chipped in scoreless outings.

10) Wishless thinking

If Nick Swisher goes on the DL, speculation is that Mark Reynolds will take over as everyday first baseman. This would mean either that John McDonald would take over the third base duties, or the team would call up Lonnie Chisenhall again. Since Chisenhall wields a world class frying pan and McDonald wields a world class Nerf™ bat, I am hoping the Indians can petition use their DH position for third base instead of pitcher.

Note: McDonald made an error at third anyway, so this is probably misguided. We should let Chisenhall simply play third badly and sell McDonald to the “Riddick” franchise. He won’t be able to capture Vin Diesel or anything, but he ought to generate enough wisecracks to keep from being eaten in the first half of the movie.

Note: John McDonald cannot hit. In other news, it is hot in Texas today.

11) Public Service for the Google Search Engine

Jack Zduriencik is an alien that has inserted a “bug” into Eric Wedge’s ear to destroy his personality. Eric Wedge does not have a personality and this would be a pointless endeavor, which is good, because it’s completely false. Fire Eric Wedge.