

The B-List: 5/8

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Cliffie!!! He was on the DL. Got roughed up in his first start. Flies cross country for a tilt with the AL West leading Angels. And he three hits 'em. In today's *B-List*, Buff delves deeper into Cliffie's start. He issues his heartfelt goodbye to Jason Davis. And comments on Casey Blake in the two hole. Amongst other things. It's

The B-List

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FINAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E	
Indians (20-10)					1							0	0
Angels (17-16)					0							0	0

W: Lee (1-0) L: E. Santana (2-5)

Apologies for the short column: it turns out that struts are actually important to your car.

1) My Favorite Player Shows Off

Cliff Lee spun a gem last night, pitching an efficient complete game for his first victory of the season. Lee carried a no-hitter into the sixth and finished by giving up only three hits, striking out two and walking the mighty Reggie Willits twice. He finished with his customarily preposterous 9:16 GB:FB ratio, so to review:

Steve praises increased ground balls, Lee pitches lousy

Lee posts absurd GB:FB ratio, Lee pitches great

I believe this is what we call in the analyst trade “being full of shit.” Cliff, throw whatever the hell you want. I’m an idiot.

One thing got me, though: universally, the “reason” for Lee’s success last night was that he “pounded the strike zone” and “got ahead of hitters” and “threw strikes.” Which, as it turns out, is complete piffle: sure, 67 strikes in 102 pitches is pretty good, but only by Lee’s standards. Yes, the first inning featured 9 strikes and 2 balls, but the next six were 7:4, 8:5, 6:4, 5:3, 8:6, and 3:2. It wasn’t so much that Lee was throwing everything for strikes, it was that the Angels as a team will generally swing at anything that resembles a strike. I mean, a five-pitch inning? That’s tremendous ... if you’re the defense. If the Indians ever have an inning like that, Imina gonna have a stroke. Don’t do that.

Anyway, terrific game by Lee: note that he didn't follow his pattern of turning into a banana after the sixth because the Angels game him three innings of ten or fewer pitches. It could be argued that his two-baserunner ninth was the beginning of the bananification process, right around the 100-pitch mark. By the way, nice move by Wedge to send him out to get his second career complete game. (Well, *nice* in that it *worked*.)

2) Department of Corrections Department

Alert reader My Editor noted yesterday that I told everyone to "see below" for a more complete explanation of Jason Davis getting the wazoo, and then provided no actual belowness. Part of this is simple oversight, but part of this is the beginning of the healing process that is getting over Jason Davis: pretending he was not there. One of my [earliest contributions](#) was to look at why Jason Davis drove me crazy, and Davis changed essentially Not One Iota from that article to his wazooification. Technically, Davis has not received an actual wazoo, but has merely been Designated For Assignment: there are scenarios in which Davis will remain in the Indians' system (cf Sikorski, B.), but with a youngish cheap pitcher, you'd have to think the chances are slim.

Anyway, Davis is gone and my tear ducts are dry and I don't care to spend more time on the topic. Veni, vidi, suck.

3) Death, taxes, and quantum tunneling

Some things are absolute certainties in life. You are going to die. You are going to make a mistake before you do (unless you die as an infant, in which case, you're not really part of my target audience anyway). And Casey Blake is going to make an embarrassing, soul-crushing outs every time he bats with runners in scoring position.

Except, of course, when he doesn't. Blake, seemingly inexplicably placed in the 2-hole behind Sizemore, had a very productive game with a pair of RBI singles and a walk that led to the first run. Each single came with a runner in scoring position (hence the RBI): he did have one other plate appearance with a runner in scoring position in which he made an out, but c'mon: the man provided 40% of the offense last night.

I have to say, although it looks ridiculous to put your .220-hitting player in the 2 slot, Casey seems to respond better to it, and is one of the more patient hitters on the team. His OBP is actually not terrible: it's not optimal, but it's not an eyesore. He also breaks up the three-straight-lefties we normally run out there in case we ever face Tony LaRussa and his Magic Matchup Bullpen Show. Anyway, although I'm not a strong advocate of the practice, I'm also not going to churn a lot of stomach acid over it.

4) Haste makes waste

Perhaps we were a bit quick to judgement in calling Travis Hafner's grand slam Monday the blow that gets him out of his mini-slump. Hafner, facing the mighty Ervin Santana ... the 2-5 Ervin Santana ... the Ervin Santana with the 5.23 ERA, the 1.60 WHIP, and the 8 HR allowed in 41 1/3 innings ... whiffed ALL FOUR TIMES HE FACED HIM. Santana struck out 6 men in 7 (pretty good) innings ... and Pronk was four of them!

Haberdashers in California were kept up custom-fitting a golden sombrero on Hafner's rather sizeable head. They finally found one of Kevin Mench's old ones.

5) Rolling along

Josh Barfield continues to look locked-in, banging out two more hits, including his first double of the season against Santana. He scored both times, thanks to the clutch hitting of Casey Blake.

Yes, that's what I said. Read it again if you have to.

6) A blast from the fire extinguisher

Trot Nixon did not get a hit, dropping his average back below Victor Martinez', although he did draw a walk.

Jhonny Peralta did nothing positive whatsoever with his bat.

Ryan Garko, dropped to the eighth slot, took advantage of David Dellucci getting two hits in front of him by accomplishing exactly bupkis. He had drawn a walk earlier in the game, though.

7) Ho Hum Dept.

Victor Martinez had two run-producing hits, including a solo home run in the 4th inning. He leads the team with a .341 batting average and 26 RBI.

Grady Sizemore stole his 11th base of the season.

8) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Mark Shapiro was a member of the Starland Vocal Band and wrote the song “Afternoon Delight.” A quick search of the music publishing industry will verify how false this statement is. Fire Eric Wedge.