

The B-List: 7/18

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
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The Indians got shut down by Mark Buehrle yesterday afternoon in the "business man's special" down at The Jake, losing their series with the hated White Sox in the process. In today's B-List, Buff takes a look back at yesterday's 5-1 loss, noting the Indians inability to get hits with runners on base and Ryan Garko staying hot. Buff also chimes in on new addition to the bullpen, Jensen Lewis.



FINAL SCORE

White Sox (42-51)	1	0	0	3
Indians (55-39)	0	0	0	0

W: Buehrle (7-5) □ □ L: Westbrook (1-5)

I'm tellin' ya, we lose this game last year. 'course, we lost it this year, too.

1) The malaise of the jejune

Thanks to Kilted Fool ("with a K") for the use of the phrase, which sums up my feelings about Jake Westbrook's start yesterday. He gave up some hits. He walked a couple guys. He struck out 3 in 6 innings. His GB:FB ratio was 10:5. Konerko did a good job fighting Jake off before hitting the two-run homer in the 4th that basically put the game out of reach (the way the offense was playing).

I'll say this: it was better than the start of his previous start, so he seems back in rhythm. But so what?

2) Ducks on the pond!

In the first inning, Victor Martinez singled, but was stranded.

In the second inning, Ryan Garko and Franklin Gutierrez BOTH singled, but were stranded.

In the third inning, Grady Sizemore and Casey Blake started the inning with a pair of singles, but Martinez grounded into a double play and Sizemore was subsequently stranded.

At this point, the Business Calculus Proof By Induction establishes a pattern for the game. The 8th inning was the only one in which the Indians did not have a baserunner; the 4th was the only other inning without a hit (Garko walked). The Indians left a total of 10 men on base, including 4 in scoring position, and that doesn't include the inning in which Martinez grounded into his SECOND double play with men on first and second to end the frame. There wasn't any particular inning in which the Indians truly squandered a golden opportunity, but they sure did hit like pikers with men on base.

In a fairly amazing set of circumstances, the 8, 9, 1, and 2

hitters for Cleveland each had two hits, representing back-to-back-to-back-to-back batting order slots ... and scored one run. In an effort to be the archetypical Cleveland batter, Josh Barfield went 2-for-2 with no one on base, and 0-for-2 with men on base. Reports that he now wants to be called "Casey Junior" have to this point proven unsubstantiated.

3) Gark smash!

Ryan Garko continued his hot streak with a pair of hits, including a long double to center that probably travelled far enough in the air to be homerworthy with a different angular trajectory. He also drew a walk after fouling off a 3-2 pitch from Buehrle. Garko has a 12-game hitting streak, with two hits in each of the seven games after the All-Star break, including Tuesday's game in which he had only two plate appearances. Five of the 12 hits after the break have been for extra bases. In his last seven games, Garko is batting .632/.667/1.211 for an OPS of 1.878. His eyebrows weigh six pounds each.

4) Welcome to the bigs!

Jensen Lewis was given a second inning of relief yesterday,

going two full innings and giving up 1 run on 3 hits and a walk. However, he also struck out 4 hitters, meaning that he has now struck out 6 batters in 3 1/3 innings. Lewis doesn't appear to throw that hard, but has an unorthodox delivery and makes hitters look unbalanced.

In other words, he is Tom Mastny 2006.

Now, that isn't entirely fair: Lewis has more pedigree than Mastny, about whom people said, "Sure, he throws strikes, but how does he get people *out*?" Well, Mastny, even in a bad year for him, is still striking out nearly a batter an inning. And Lewis doesn't do anything remotely resembling throwing strikes (although part of that can be attributed to Major League Jitters). But if Lewis 2007 can do what Mastny 2006 did, he'll be a valuable addition to a pen that has to carry Fredo Cabrera and wait for Mastny to regain his command.

5) Speaking of Not Strikes

Jason Stanford came into the game and dramatically allowed his beautiful assistant to blindfold him before throwing the following sequences:

*Andy Gonzalez: Strike (looking), Strike (looking), Ball, Ball, Ball
Ball*

Toby Hall: Strike (foul), ground out

Jerry Owens: Strike (foul), Ball, Ball, Ball, Ball

Tad Iguchi: Ball, Strike (foul), Ball, Ball, Ball

At this point, the crowd began to murmur, and the insurance underwriters began to mutter about lawsuits, and Stanford was forced to remove the blindfold. With the bases loaded and one out, Stanford struck out Jim Thome and induced Paul Konerko to fly out on a 1-2 count.

Okay, I made up the part about the blindfold, but 12 balls in 17 pitches is awfully crummy no matter how you slice it. I give him a lot of credit for bearing down and attacking Thome, though, who fouled off three 2-strike pitches before finally striking out swinging.

6) A day to forget

Not only did Victor Martinez ground into TWO double plays, he hit a double-play ground ball with two outs to end the 5th. Although Martinez did go 1-for-4, he personally left 5 men on base and ended two innings with groundouts, one of which was

a double play with two runners on. Since Vic is hitting .322/.383/.551 with 74 (!) RBI, I'm inclined to cut him some slack.

7) Duly Noted

Grady Sizemore, Casey Blake, and Franklin Gutierrez joined Ryan Garko and Casey Junior in collecting two hits apiece. Gutierrez hit his 4th double of the season off Buehrle and is currently outslugging Victor Martinez (.329/.376/.533). He claims to have never heard the phrase "small sample size" before. With Martinez and Gutierrez hitting so well, and Omar Vizquel having played so well for many years, I advocate sending three thousand fifty seven scouts to Venezuela immediately.