

The B-List: 8/8

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C.C. just can't get a break here in the second half of the season. For the third straight time, the Tribe wasted a solid performance from C.C., falling 6-4 in 13 innings to the hated White Sox. In today's B-List, Buff breaks down Sabathia's start, analyzes the Raffies, and talks about Hafner's injury and the debut of Asdrubal Cabrera.



FINAL SCORE

Indians (64-50)	0	1	0	0
White Sox (53-60)	0	0	2	0

W: Contreras (6-14) L: Fultz (3-2)

It's frustrating when Chicago uses all their pesky Smallball tactics to beat us!

1) Even a minimized Inning of Crap™ is ... well ... crap

Really, it seems like nit-picking to harp on C.C. Sabathia's two-run 3rd inning: they were the only two runs he gave up in an otherwise good

performance. Sabathia gave up 6 hits and 3 walks against 6 Ks in 7 solid innings of work, certainly pitching well enough to win for any team other than one with Cleveland's or Minnesota's offense. (Actually, Minnesota scored 11 runs last night, nearly doubling their quantity from the four-game set with the Indians.) Two runs in seven innings is a very good start, and Sabathia was right around the strike zone, throwing 70 of his 106 pitches for strikes. It would have made no sense to bring him back out to start the 8

th

, and he did a good job.

This having been said, I think that any inning that involves giving up an extra-base hit to Toby Hall is, by definition, an IoC. In fact, this Chicago lineup, top to bottom, might be the worst (in terms of average) I've seen in a while:

Owens: .249

Fields: .248

Konerko: .271

Dye: .241

Erstad: .265

Andy Gonzalez: .220

Podsednik: .262

Uribe: .219

Hall: .229

Did we get transported to the early '70s and no one told me? I

know Thome is out, but he's only hitting .273 ... which, admittedly, would lead this lineup.

Back to Toby Hall: not only can Hall not hit, but his power is theoretical: coming into the game, 1 of his 15 hits was for extra bases (a double), leading to a SLG of .239, or an isolated power (ISO) of .015. To put this into perspective, I have an ISO of .000, as do Frank Duffy (who is retired), my daughter (who is four), Stephen Hawking (who is disabled), and Percy Shelley (who is dead). Giving up an extra-base hit to Toby Hall is an achievement of significant rarity. After getting Owens to fly out, Sabathia gave up consecutive run-scoring hits to Josh Fields and Paul Konerko (Fields on the first pitch, Konerko on the second) to fall behind 2-1.

In fact, Konerko's single that inning was the ONLY single Sabathia gave up: his other FIVE hits were for extra bases, including a triple by Juan Uribe, who came into the game hitting .214 (but an ISO of .137: that's how powerless Toby Hall is). Now, Sabathia retired his last seven batters, including three by strikeout, and came on strong at the end. But giving up five extra-base hits, four to the set of {Hall, Fields, and Uribe} is disturbing.

2) To the master of the six out save, a one out save is apparently kind of a big deal

Really, you can get as angry and worked up and hair-shirt-wearing as you want about it, but the simple fact is that Joe Borowski threw a bad pitch to A.J. Pierzynski and Pierzynski hammered it. He got out of the inning after putting two more on, and I suppose we can do a bunch of stress-testing and pitch-counting and all that to see if the likelihood of this increased because of his last outing or last few outings or he got a bad haircut, but I think it's as simple as A.J. Pierzynski being a professional.

Sucked though.

3) A game of hundreds of feet

Look, after Sabathia had thrown 106 pitches, with back-to-back right-handers coming up, with a 1-run lead in the 8th inning, there's no one I wanted on the mound more than Rafael Betancourt. He just flat-out overpowered Paul Konerko. He went 2-2 on Jermaine Dye, one of the strikes being a swing-and-miss. And then he threw a hittable pitch and Dye hit it (out).

Betancourt is still our best relief pitcher and I still put him

in that situation the next hundred times it arises. Dye just hit it out, what can you say?

4) The greater of two Raffies

Well, perhaps you can exhort Betancourt to be more like Rafael Perez, who came into a tie game with a runner on first, one out, and Pierzynski pinch-hitting for Hall. After fouling off two 2-2 pitches, Pierzynski grounded into a double play to end the threat.

In the next inning, after a quick groundout by Jerry Owens, Josh Fields hit a ground ball to short that Peralta threw to first to get Fields by a step-and-a-half. The umpire (Bruce Froemming, a fine human being but not the most attentive on this play) called Fields safe in one of the worst calls in recent memory. (This wasn't a bang-bang play: this was Fields being truly out and Froemming simply calling him safe. I kept waiting for Bugs Bunny to leap out and try the old "Out! Safe! Out! Safe! Safe! Out!" routine.)

So Perez simply induced another double play. Ho hum.

In a real show of faith, Perez got to stay out and face Dye, although he walked him. Erstad sacrificed him to second, and Perez walked Andy Gonzalez.

Now look, I know this is the smart play: you set up the force, Gonzalez' run means nothing, it's the obvious move ... but they *intentionally walked Andy Gonzalez*. That just hurts my sciatic nerve.

Anyway, Podsednik flew out (aw, no third double play!) and Uribe grounded out and Perez finished the night with 2 2/3 innings of 1-hit (2 BB, one intentional) ball to lower his ERA to 1.86. I like Rafael Perez.

Perez threw 34 pitches and looked to be laboring to locate his pitches: besides, Borowski is the closer. But hindsight wonders what he would have done with Pierzynski (albeit a second time).

5) The best-laid plans of mice, men, and Eric Wedge

Travis Hafner was hurt early in the game, so Jason Michaels spent most of the game in the DH slot. This hampered his flexibility later in the game, especially when Kenny Lofton was facing left-handed relievers. This says nothing about Wedge's abilities: it's just one of those things.

However, he did a nice job in the 12th to help facilitate the go-ahead run (later squandered): after Ryan Garko worked a ten-pitch single off last-resort reliever Jose Contreras, Wedge sent Josh Barfield to run for him. Rookie Asdrubal Cabrera then successfully sacrificed Barfield to second, and Barfield scored on a two-base error Lofton hit to Uribe. (The error was kind of tough-luck, in that Uribe had to run a long way and avoid Josh Fields, but the ball did fall out of his glove: that's an error.)

By the way, a big raspberry to Grady Sizemore for fouling out on the first pitch with one out and

Barfield at second. Phbt!

Anyway, we scored one run and had another in scoring position with two outs.

By the way, a big raspberry to Victor Martinez for grounding out on the first pitch with two outs and Lofton at second. Phbt!

Anyway, we scored.

Now there are two choices:

- a) Slot Barfield at 2B, move Drooby Doo to 3B, and slide Blake to 1B*
- b) Move Martinez to 1B, bring in Shoppach to catch the (ostensibly last) inning*

Both are perfectly defensible: I liked the latter, but it shows a certain flexibility to be able to do either. (Shoppach can't hit, but neither could Cabrera or Barfield, no net change there.) I liked the pinch-running and the bunt, though.

6) Paper tiger

One of the real holes in the lineup was production from the corner outfielders: after the injury to David Dellucci, it was not obvious who should get the most plate appearances against right-handed pitching. To address this, Mark Shapiro acquired Kenny Lofton, who sported a good AVG and OBP and adds speed to a lineup that is top-to-bottom pretty slow.

As a Cleveland Indian, Kenny Lofton is hitting .194. In August, he sports a .214/.290/.214 line. He hit the ball that looked like the big run-producer last

night, but overall, whether it be from him pressing or him being 40 or whatever, but this is not actually helping.

(Note: Yes, I know the sample size is dinky. I want some hits.)

7) Welcome to the bigs!

Asdrubal Cabrera made his major-league debut by going 0-for-3 with a sacrifice, a HBP, and a few routine plays in the field. One of the outs was hit well the other way, but snared by Fields at third. As a Venezuelan shortstop, he is required by Venezuelan law to wear #13, so he does.

8) Here and there

Jhonny Peralta hit a solo shot to start the scoring last night. He ended with 2 hits and 2 RBI.

Ryan Garko had a pair of hits; Casey Blake had a single, a double, and stole a base.

Travis Hafner is day-to-day with "knee tightness."