

## The B-List: 9/14-9/16

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Well, the Indians took two of three from the Royals this weekend, but the Tigers swept their series with the Twins, shaving a game off the Indians lead in the process. The Indians lead the Tigers by 4.5 games going into their huge series that starts tonight at The Jake. In the Monday edition of The B-List, Buff recaps the weekend set with KC, giving all kinds of love to Fausto and The Department of Raffies in the process.



<del>FINAL SCORE</del>				
Royals (63-83)	0	0	0	0
Indians (86-61)	1	0	0	0

W: Borowski (4-5) L: Riske (1-4)

<del>FINAL SCORE</del>				
Royals (63-84)	0	0	0	0
Indians (87-61)	1	0	1	0

W: Carmona (17-8) L: Greinke (6-6)

<del>FINAL SCORE</del>				
Royals (64-84)	0	2	0	0
Indians (87-62)	0	0	0	0

W: B. Buckner (1-1) L: Laffey (3-2) S: Soria (15)

Congratulations to Jim Thome on his 500<sup>th</sup> home run. It's easier to be magnanimous from first place, but he remains one of my favorite players.

## 1) The return of the Inning of Crap™!

The series looked like it ought to be two easy wins and a tossup, with Sabathia and Carmona starting off the first two games and a matchup of unproven yoots in the third. And for four innings, Sabathia sawed through the Kansas City order, while Brian Bannister did largely the same to Cleveland. Bannister, in fact, would leave the game after six innings having given up only two hits, although a Smallball Run in the first kept it from being a scoreless outing for him. (He walked three, but those calling for Dayton Moore's head for trading live arm Abercrombie Bugnose for him appear to have been off base.)

However, after so many fine outings in a row for Sabathia, many of us had forgotten his propensity to sprinkle one truly horrific inning amongst many good ones. To remind us, Sabathia coughed up a fifth inning that went:

Single, K, single, K, single, single, double, groundout

Sabathia went seven innings. In the other six innings, Sabathia gave up 2 hits, 0 runs, and 2 walks to go with eleven (!!)

strikeouts. In this inning: 4 runs on 5 hits (and 2 Ks).

There was no real eureka-type explanation for the inning: it wasn't like Sabathia was getting squeezed, as three of the five hits were on the first strike the batter saw. They weren't really cheap hits, although they weren't bombing away, either. It was just a one-inning stretch in which Sabathia threw the ball, and average players from a bad team hit it.

This having been said, I will be okay if I don't see another **IoC™** from Sabathia this season.

## **2) It's a marathon, not a sprint**

Well, that's true of the SEASON. In a GAME, it's okay to score in ANY of the innings.

In innings 1-6, the Indians scored exactly one run in each game. Now, I understand that when you're facing a

mighty three-man rotation of Brian Bannister, Zach Greinke, and Billy Buckner, each of whom get carded at the 7-11 after the game, it's going to be hard to push a lot of runs across. But one run per game ... that's pretty lousy. In fact, the Indians got out-hit in two of the three games including one which they *won*.

Now, on the other hand, in innings 7-9, the Indians scored 4, 4, and 2 runs ... and that includes not having a ninth inning on Saturday. So in a sense, it's nice to see that the team never gives up and plays to the end and continues to the final whistle, but ... y'know, striking out in the tenth is less valuable when you've missed five ten pins in the first nine frames.

### **3) This having been noted**

After the Inning of Crap™, I pretty much figured we were going to lose Friday's game. I mean, yes, we've been scoring in the back thirds of games and yes, the Royals' bullpen isn't very deep. Soria is very good, but the other guys are hit-and-miss. Jimmy Gobble has a 3.12 ERA on

the season ... but sometimes can't control the strike zone. Joel Peralta has good stuff ... but can't always keep hitters from pounding it. David Riske has a 2.42 ERA ... but remains quintessentially David Riske.

Look, David Riske was one of my favorite pitchers for the Indians. I latched onto him after he posted some insane numbers in Beefalo one year. But Riske was always more setup man than closer, more Eric Plunk than Jose Mesa, more Paul Shuey than Bob Wickman, and as an extreme flyball pitcher with one pitch (a weirdo hopping fastball), was always prone to giving up a home run exactly when you wanted him to do something else. He would always end the season with really good overall numbers, and the fanbase in general would always be up in arms about he blew this number of games.

So I suppose it wasn't a tremendous surprise that Victor Martinez victimized him for a game-tying homer to lead off the bottom of the 8<sup>th</sup>. It was pretty

surprising that Casey Blake did the same with the first pitch of the ninth inning, though. At least, it surprised *me*.  
(And probably Mr. Riske.)

The 4-run outburst on Saturday changed a 2-0 Joe Borowski Nailbiter Save into a 6-0 Rafael Perez Comfy Chair. And although it fell short, the Indians' two-run 7<sup>th</sup> on Sunday set up the last-inning game-blowing shenanistylings of Josh Barfield and his Magic Feet. Don't go to bed on these guys!

But ... guys? I'd prefer having to protect a large lead to having to depend on the Magic Feet.

## 4) Fausto!™

Eight innings (103 pitches).

Three hits.

Nine Ks.

Zero walks or runs.

Huzzah!

## 5) Dept. of Raffies

Rafael Betancourt had a scoreless inning in which he dispatched the Royals on 11 pitches despite allowing a single (who was subsequently caught stealing).

Rafael Perez needed TWELVE pitches to dismiss the Royals in order ... but that would be because no one could be caught on the basepaths by virtue of the **three strikeouts**

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(In Betancourt's other (this one perfect) scoreless inning, he needed FOURTEEN pitches and only struck out two, so he had to buy dinner.)

If you read between the lines, with a lot of nuance and subtlety, you may get an inkling of a glimpse of an impression of the idea that I like when Raffies pitch. (At this point, Perez has passed Betancourt on my list of favorite Raffies, though.)

## **6) Things you should not see at a ballgame**

There are many, many things you should not see at a baseball game. You should not see Britney Spears performing the National Anthem in stripper garb. You should not see Stephen Hawking throw out the first pitch. And you should not see the return of Ten Cent Beer Night.

However, there are two actual baseball things you shouldn't see, either, and both of them presented themselves Sunday. Aaron Laffey walked Alex Gordon on a 3-2 pitch so vigorously that Gordon ended up on **SECOND BASE**. That is one seriously vigorous walk right there, ladies and germs. Yes, it was a wild pitch, but ... well, that's just bad. And the runner on first got to third! And then

scored on a ground ball to second! And then my pancreas caught fire! (That shouldn't happen, either, although admittedly, I wasn't at a baseball game.)

But another thing that should not happen is for you to be on second base, and have a ground ball hit IN FRONT OF YOU to the SHORTSTOP and have you get thrown out at third. That just can't happen. You need to have a CAT scan after making that play. The blood supply is just not making it all the way uphill if that happens. Don't do that. (Josh Barfield.)

## 7) The primary skill of the leadoff man

Is it the ability to steal bases? Is it the ability to bunt? Is it the ability to rip bases out of the ground and proclaim oneself "The Greatest of All Time" while referring to oneself in the third person? No. It is to Get On Base.

That's it. One skill. Every other skill is secondary. This doesn't render them unimportant. It just makes them not primary.

## Grady Sizemore can Get On Base.

Sizemore actually only had one hit this weekend, yet got on base five times and scored two runs: in fact, he didn't score in the only game in which he got a hit. Now, he also did steal a base, has shown he can bunt, and may develop the skill to speak of himself as "Grady" instead of "I," but for now, getting on base will be sufficient.

## **8) Team smash!**

In fact, of the 5 runs the Indians scored Friday, four were on home runs: the Indians hit at least one homer in each game and had three doubles Saturday.

## **9) Get well soon**

Ryan Garko was struck on the hand with a very poor throw.

## **10) Adventures in Third Base Coaching!**

Here is the scenario: Ryan Garko is on first, and the batter laces a double to the wall. Ryan Garko is nearly as fast as a cheese enchilada. You send him home, and he is thrown out while catcher John Buck finishes reading "Nicholas Nickleby."

Later, Kenny Lofton is on second base. A ball is hit to the outfield, where Mark Teahen pauses for a moment to butter his glove, then drops the routine fly and wanders around for a while, thinking, "Mmmm, buttered glove." Lofton, a fast runner, is held at third.

Next week: a discussion of the wisdom of swinging at a pitch in the strike zone with two outs in the bottom of the ninth when you have two strikes.

## **11) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine**

Mark Shapiro won the position of Defensive Coordinator for the Cincinnati Bengals last Thursday in a poker game. I do not believe Mark Shapiro plays poker, and this statement is false. Fire Eric Wedge.