

The B-List: 5/23-5/26

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The hits just keep on coming. Not from the Indians bats mind you. Hits to the collective morale of the fan base of the Cleveland Indians. Don't believe me? Go take a look at our Indians message forum. If you don't get a headache after reading the first few posts, all laced with misery, gloom, and doom. In today's B-List, Buff takes a look back at the three game set with the Rangers and last night's painful 12th inning loss to the Pale Hoes. Bartender!



FINAL SCORE

Rangers (25-25)	4	0	7	0
Indians (22-26)	2	1	3	0

W: Loe (1-0) L: Carmona (4-2)

FINAL SCORE

Rangers (25-26)	1	1	0	0
Indians (23-26)	0	1	3	0

W: Lee (7-1) L: Feldman (1-2) S: Borowski (3)

FINAL SCORE

Rangers (26-26)	0	0	0	0
Indians (23-27)	1	0	0	0

W: Jam. Wright (3-1) L: Kobayashi (2-2) S: C.J. Wilson (10)

FINAL SCORE

White Sox (28-22)	1	0	0	0
Indians (23-28) (3rd 5.5 GB CHW)			1	0

W: Logan (2-1) L: Elarton (0-1) S: Jenks (13)

Due to a variety of reasons, personal and otherwise, this column lacks much passion or humor.

1) Now managing your team: Epstein and Barr

I don't care.

I'm not going to give you detailed, passionate defense of my position: you are free to consider me a bad fan or at least a bad columnist, but this team has crushed the life out of me. It's not good. It's not even interesting. It has some fine starters. It has some lesser starters who are capable of fine performances. It has a few guys capable of hitting mistakes over the wall. That's it. Nothing else. We are the Pittsburgh Pirates.

I can't do it. Sometimes the joyous exultation of a game well-won is inspiring. Sometimes the frustrated fury of a game poorly-lost is inspiring. This is not inspiring. This is soul-crushing. I will write, as Stravinsky did, because I am compelled, but it is not "fun." It is not even "diversionary." It sucks. This team inspires nothing but dread, failure, and ennui. It is not the worst team in the league. It is certainly not the worst team in my lifetime, or even recent memory. It simply is, and that level of "is" is no more enthralling or enticing than a poorly-made room-cooled day-old grilled cheese sandwich.

I don't care, and by the feedback I've gotten (thanks, Dad!), neither do you.

2) Ben giveth

It's hardly an exaggeration to say that without Ben Francisco this weekend, the Indians might have been swept by the Rangers, potentially losing three straight extra-inning games instead of only two. Francisco had the big blow of the weekend, clubbing a three-run homer off Scott Feldman to give Cliff Lee the cushion necessary to coast to his 7th win on the season: he also doubled and scored in that game, representing fully 80% of Cleveland's offense. This came on the heels of a 3-for-5 2-RBI game on Friday night. Although he went 1-for-6 on Monday, he did double again on Sunday, scoring Cleveland's only run of the game.

Francisco is not only hitting a robust .338 on the season, but he is slugging .568, over half his base hits have been for extra bases, he leads the team in doubles despite having fewer than half the plate appearances as some of the season-long regulars, and leads the team in OPS (at .935) for anyone with more plate appearances than Jeremy Sowers (1).

3) Ben taketh away

There are still reminders that Francisco is not The Perfect Player, though: not only was he caught off base on an egregious bit of Cleveland Indians Baserunning, but his preposterous error in the 10th inning of Sunday's game allowed the second (and winning) run to score. Francisco came to the plate four times on Sunday and Monday with a runner in scoring position and produced nothing whatsoever. But it was the error that truly thumbs out like a sore stick.

4) Perspective

Cliff Lee had a fine outing Saturday to help produce Cleveland's only win of the four-game set, but had he pitched that game Sunday, he would have lost. Paul Byrd pitched a pretty good game Monday, scattering 10 hits in 6 2/3 innings but only allowing 3 runs (1 yielded by reliever Raffy Perez). He needed only 80 pitches and was aided by three double plays. Had he pitched Saturday, he would have won his game.

Had C.C. Sabathia pitched his game on pretty much any other day, he would have won.

Fausto Carmona hurt himself, which is excusable, yielding the mound to Jorge Julio, which is not.

5) The Elephant in the Room is Sitting on your Chest

After a fast start in which three of the first four Indians got hits and scored a run, here are the Indians' plate appearances with runners on base Sunday and Monday (player, result, runners in scoring position/runners on base):

1. Aubrey LO 5 (1/2)
2. Peralta 2-3 (1/2)

3. Cabrera S 1-3 (1/2)
4. Sizemore IBB (2/2)
5. Francisco 1-2 (2/3)
6. Hafner F-7 (2/3)
7. Peralta 6-3 (1/1)
8. Dellucci K (1/1)
9. Francisco 5-3 (1/1)
10. Martinez 4-6-3 (0/1)
11. Dellucci 4-6-3 (0/1)
12. Francisco F-9 (0/1)
13. Hafner BB (1/1)
14. Martinez F-9 (1/2)
15. Peralta K (0/1)
16. Dellucci 4-6-3 (0/1)
17. Sizemore K (1/1)
18. Francisco F-8 (1/1)
19. Peralta K (0/1)

20. Aubrey F-8 (1/1)
(* *Blake at bat when Gutierrez caught stealing*)
21. Cabrera 1B (0/1)
22. Sizemore F-9 (1/2)
23. Francisco 1B (0/1)
24. Martinez 1B (1/2) RUN
25. Aubrey 3-2 (1/2)
26. Peralta K (1/2)
27. Gutierrez 3 (unass.) (1/2)
28. Sizemore F-7 (1/2)
29. Dellucci 1B (0/1)
30. Francisco F-7 (1/2)

31. Cabrera 1-6 (0/1)
32. Sizemore F-6 (0/1)
33. Dellucci F-6 (0/1)
34. Blake E1 (0/1)
35. Cabrera K (2/2)
36. Sizemore K (2/2)
37. Peralta sac 1-3 (0/1)
38. Gutierrez 4-3 (1/1)
39. Blake IBB (1/1)
40. Shoppach LO-9 (2/2)
41. Carroll 1B (0/1)
42. Peralta 6-4-3 (1/2)
43. Gutierrez K (1/1)

So, for those counting at home, in 27 plate appearances in which we had a runner in scoring position, the Indians made 23 outs in 22 out-producing plays (1 DP), sacrificed once, drew three walks (two intentional), and got ONE HIT. One hit! As in one! But even with a runner simply on first, there were only three other singles. Which then led to one run. As in one!

Special congratulations go to David Dellucci, who managed to ground into more double plays in ONE GAME than the Indians scored runs with runners in scoring position in TWO. The Indians grounded into as many double plays (four) as they had hits with runners on base (four).

I have no special way to look at these data to cause mirth.
There is no mirth. This is chum.

6) Bullpen Roundup

Although Raffy Perez' single to A.J. Pierzynski ultimately cost us Monday's game, it was his only hit allowed as he struck out 3 in 1 1/3 innings. Raffy Betancourt followed with two scoreless one-hit innings, also fanning three of his own. Betancourt also fanned one in a perfect inning Sunday; Perez had a walk and a K in 1 1/3 hitless innings Saturday. If these two are back in form slotted into their roles, it would go a long way toward stretching the starters' dominance through to the very end of games.

Joe Borowski picked up his third save Saturday with a horrifying inning of long fly balls. He pitched another scoreless inning Sunday, which was also scoreless and also featured a horrifying array of long fly balls.

A bunch of guys pitched Friday and the less said the better.

7) Hey, we had one of those!

To say that I am not happy to say Scott Elarton is to say that I would prefer fewer traffic accidents, or that I was not pleased to undergo root canal. I savaged Elarton when he was here before, and the man was crushed by the inexorable tide against the rocks in Kansas City. I had no problem with him signing with Beefalo, as long as he was being showcased for other teams to be suckered into. I had not dreamed that he would actually pitch a meaningful inning for the Cleveland Indians. I find this very concept abhorrent and nonsensical. Scott Elarton was bad, and now he is older. He did not get better. He remained Scott Elarton. I am infuriated. Scott Elarton is not chum, he is the *bait* you use to *catch* chum. Never, ever, ever use Scott Elarton again. How ludicrous.

8) Silver Lining Dept.

The offense actually did produce a fair number of baserunners: they scored 9 runs on Friday, and had double-digit baserunners in each game (except, ironically, the game they WON, with only 9). To have that many opportunities bodes well for getting out of the offensive slump.

9) Black Cloud Dept.

So what?

10) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Larry Dolan wears a bunny suit to most occasions that call for him to appear powerful and professional. This would be easily verifiable were it true, which it isn't. Fire Mark Shapiro.