

In today's B-List, Buff goes inside yesterday's throttling of the Athletics. Included are thoughts on the resurgence of Paul Byrd, the return of Fernando Cabrera, and the implosion of the Oakland bullpen.



"There is no *there* there." - Gertrude Stein, referring to Oakland
There is no *relief pitching* there." - Steve Buffum, referring to Oakland

Not that I don't agree with Ms. Stein as well.

1) Lending oneself to simplistic analysis

Just because an explanation is simple doesn't mean it's without merit. It's simplistic to say that Paul Byrd is only effective when he throws a high percentage of strikes, but ... well, Paul Byrd is only effective when he throws a high percentage of strikes:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|---|---|----|-----|---|----|---|---|
| % strikes | IP | ER | 62 | 6 | 5 | 60 | 3.2 | 6 | 73 | 7 | 2 |
| 61 | 3 | 7 | | | | | | | | | |
| 72 | 5 | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| 75 | 7 | 3 | | | | | | | | | |

Three times he's been around the 60% mark and got shelled twice (and 5 in 6 is not good). Three times he's been around the 73% mark and he's been Quality (2 or 3 runs). The nice thing about Byrd is that you can pretty much tell which guy you get by the second inning.

By the way, Byrd certainly has received ridiculous run support this season, but run support had nothing to do with him winning this particular game. It was a one or two-run game through six innings, and he pitched well to keep us ahead (not great, but well). Yeah, nine runs in the seventh removed much of the stress, but Byrd was good, too.

2) Full participation

Every Indian with a plate appearance reached base (only Ben Broussard avoided getting a hit). Every Indians starter scored a run. It's nice to see a team dedicated to equality of opportunity.

3) I knew you could do it, Kelly!

No I didn't. I'm a Big Fat Liar.

But Shoppach did have a 2-run single to drive in the 2nd and 3rd

runs of the Big Inning, getting back to the top of the order with runners on base. Hafner went so far as to say that Shoppach's hit (going the other way, a nice piece of hitting) was The Key Hit. I think Trav is blowing a little smoke up Shoppach's behind there since Kelly makes so few appearances, but it shows a certain *esprit d'corps* this team will probably need over the course of the season.

4) Introducing the "Let's Go Home" Theory

When Scott Sauerbeck throws a perfect inning of relief, this suggests that the opposing batters are trying very hard to help end the game more mercifully (see the Orioles blowout). He threw 6 of 14 pitches for strikes, including 3 in a strikeout ... and still got out of the inning without a hit or walk. I'm happy for him. I'm happy for us. I'm not deluding myself into considering this a

meaningful data point.

5) Presenting the Top of the Order

Grady Sizemore: reached

base 4 of 5 plate

appearances Jason

Michaels: 4 of 6

Jhonny Peralta: 3 of 6

When a .500 OBP makes

you the piker, your

offense is probably

clicking pretty loudly.

Nice to see Michaels with

a mini-streak: with the hot heat generated by the 4-5-6 hitters in this lineup, it behooves us to have guys waiting for them.

(I should mention that Todd Hollandsworth was 1-for-1 replacing Grady, but that seems like overkill. Kind of like doubling off Flores.)

6) I roam around,

**around, around,
around, around**
Casey Blake makes
his debut in the 5 hole
while Victor Martinez
has the night off. After
a brisk 3-for-5 night
including a
(muttonhead-aided)
triple and a three-run
bomb, I think we have

some evidence that it's not the low-pressure nine hole that is making the difference this year. (Small Sample Size Alert, but I'm virtually giddy following Blake's numbers this year.)

7) Ducks on the

pond!

Ah, so what?

Okay, nine left on
base, 6 in scoring
position ... and I
don't care. Forget I
said anything.

**8) Obligatory
Obligation Dept.**

Ferd Cabrera had a scoreless inning of relief. Although the LGH Theory may apply, it's nice to see him go scoreless and attack hitters (no strikeouts, but his

stuff is still mean).

**9) Hey, we've got
some of those!**

Joe Kerosene:

1/3 IP, 2 H, 1 BB,

1 HBP, 3 ER,

14:12

strike-to-ball ratio

GasCo Calero:

1/3 IP, 2 H, 2 BB,

4 ER 10:13

Ron Flames: 2

2/3 IP, 3 H (1

HR), 2 ER

Sweet.

10) Because I

can

Nice 3-6-3

double play

started (and

ended) by

Broussard.

3-6-3's a

neat-looking
play. (So's
1-2-3, but I don't
want to see a
lot of those.)