

## The B-List: 7/29

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It was one of those coulda, shoulda, woulda games last night at The Prog, as the Tribe fell 8-5 to the Tigers due their inability to hit with runners in scoring position, and the Tigers proficiency hitting with runners on and two outs. In today's B-List, Buff not only declares that Matt Ginter is a &quot;mook&quot;, but also goes on to explain the difference between a &quot;mook&quot;, a &quot;schmoe&quot;, and a &quot;fungus&quot; to his adoring readers.



FINAL SCORE				
Tigers (54-52)	0	1	0	3
Indians (46-59)	0	0	0	1

*W: Galarraga (9-4) □ □ L: Ginter (1-2)*

Not to hype the Casey Blake Haiku contest too much, but I will helpfully point out that writing and reading haiku about Casey Blake is both more enjoyable and rewarding than watching many Cleveland Indians games. Like last night's, for example.

### 1) Taxonomy Lesson

I was once asked by a loyal (if nepotistic) reader what the difference between a &quot;mook&quot; and a &quot;schmoe,&quot; and whether either was related to or in danger of becoming a &quot;fungus.&quot; With you the reader in mind,

here is a quick explanation of the terms in play here. Note that these are not necessarily disjoint, independent terms: there is some overlap amongst them, and a "schmoe" is certainly capable of playing like a "fungus," while a "fungus" can sometimes fool you into thinking he is simply a "mook." Note also that these exclusively the terms as I use them: please do not write Rob Neyer and quote him three years of statistics to prove that, say, Ross Gload is only a "mook" and not a "schmoe."

To me, a **mook** is a replacement-level guy, sometimes termed Just Some Guy, a guy you can find to make a spot start or late-inning appearance. Sometimes dubbed a "Quad-A Player," the mook (*mookimus ordinarius*) is a sound-enough player who simply lacks real outstanding talent. He can put up stats in the minor leagues, but is usually old for his level, and given limited opportunities in the majors, will perform at an uninspiring pace. Given the nature of small sample sizes, this inspiration-free performance may be mediocre, or truly dismal, but rarely anything really great. The

### **mook**

simply doesn't have it in him. Sure, he could go on a tear, as evidenced by my league-winning fantasy team of 1995, the Akron Misanthropes, who rode a hot streak by replacement third baseman

### **Jeff Manto**

to the regular-season title. Manto was many things, including a Beefalo Bison Ring of Beefalo Bisons honoree, but great was not one of them.

### **Mook**

was. God bless him.

A **schmoe**, on the other hand, is a fundamentally-flawed player, a player who might actually have an impressive skill to latch onto, but lacks other mitigating skills that lead to regular and sustained success. A **schmoe** might have great speed, for example, but be thoroughly unable to hit left-handed pitching. Or he might throw 95 mph ... as straight as a rifle ball with no discernable breaking pitch. A

### **schmoe**

may hit for power, but not particularly often.

## Schmoes

usually do one thing particularly poorly that makes them extreme situational players, players who, if put into an everyday role, are exposed in all their

### **schmo**

ish glory. Conversely,

### **schmoes**

usually have one thing they do deceptively well, which is why they've given multiple chances.

### **Joey Gathright**

is a

### **schmoe**

, but so was

### **Jason Michaels**

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A **fungus** simply lacks redeeming characteristics. Watching him play is an ordeal. He is a bad player you want to go away. Again, sample size dictates that you might be fooled into thinking a **fungus** is merely a **schmoe**, but stay focused and steel yourself against fleeting, ephemeral successes: the

### **fungus**

must be eliminated from the roster, or you will lose all your hair, stomach lining, and restraint watching him play. The archetypical

### **fungus**

is

### **Mike Rouse**

(or

### **Danny Graves**

, if you prefer washed-up relief pitchers), but

### **David Dellucci**

has sadly fallen from

### **schmoe**

to

### **fungus**

in recent times.

Anyway, **Matt Ginter** is a **mook**.

## 2) Yeah, but how did he *pitch*?

Well, like a mook, of course.

Look, Ginter wasn't historically atrocious or anything: Paul Byrd has had some starts worse than this this season. Ginter generally threw strikes (50 in 77 pitches) and got through the first three innings without much damage (a solo homer by Miguel Cabrera). He kept the ball down, inducing 7 ground ball outs to 2 in the air, and this came with an inning-ending double play to end the first.

Ginter's problem was one of simple ordinariness: 4 of his 8 hits were for extra bases, and the fact that two of them were two-out RBI doubles in the 4<sup>th</sup> pretty much ended Ginter's outing.

Ginter is what he is, and we need that, and when we no longer need it, Ginter will no longer provide it. If Paul Byrd is traded, I wouldn't be surprised to see Ginter ride out the season. And then he'll leave. Because he's a mook.

## 3) The Game in a Nutshell

Seven of Detroit's eight runs scored with two outs. Given 14 hits, 2 walks, and a hit batsman, they only left 6 runners on base (they hit into three double plays). A few quality pitches here and there, and Detroit scores two runs.

Of Cleveland's 8 stranded runners, an unfathomable SEVEN were in scoring position when the final out of the inning was recorded. A few quality swings here and there, and Cleveland scores ten runs.

It's hard to say that you squandered a game in which you were outhit 14-7, but by golly, not so hard that I have to refrain from saying it.

#### **4) Problems with Taxonomy, or Relief Pitching Drives Me Crazy**

I give up.

Juan Rincon, who has looked better of late, did some things quite well. After blundering around a bit by going 2-1 to each of the first two hitters, he struck out the second swinging and got Miguel Cabrera down 0-2. Cabrera executed a better piece of hitting than Rincon did pitching and laced a single to right, but Rincon struck out Matt Joyce after falling behind 3-0. He then got ahead of Gary Sheffield, hitting a disappointing .218 on the season, got him to foul off a 1-2 pitch, then threw a lousy pitch that Sheffield punished for a two-run double. So, is Rincon good or not? Just a mook? Or just small sample size theater?

Jensen Lewis' last outing was grotesque. And yet, here he is, flashing great movement on his pitches and, despite hitting one batter (on a two-strike pitch!) and walking another, he induced a pair of double plays to face the minimum in two fine hitless innings of work. So, is Lewis good or not? Fundamentally a schmoe? Or a real asset?

Raffy Betancourt threw strikes (8 in 12 pitches) and recorded two quick outs after a leadoff single. However, his first pitch to Brandon Inge, mired in the midst of a Brandon-for-Inge career stretch and hitting .227 on the season, was blasted for a two-run shot. Betancourt was arguably the best setup man in baseball last season, and this season he is atrocious. Has he lost his edge? Is the dividing line between "great" and "schmoe" that thin? Is Betancourt good or not?

Masa Kobayashi yielded a leadoff double, but then got a first-pitch groundout and went 0-2 (both strikes fouled off) to each of the next two hitters, both of whom were out on balls not hit out of the infield. Kobayashi can look dominant when his splitter is moving right and guys are willing to swing at his slider, and look thoroughly hittable when his command is not excellent. Is Kobayashi good or not?

My guess is that ... I'm just guessing.

## **5) Attaching too much significance to a small sample because it makes me feel better**

Ryan Garko has 11 hits (11-for-37) in his past 10 games, including 4 multi-hit games and 6 hits for extra bases (4 doubles, two homers). This constitutes a "hot streak" for Garko, whose overall numbers are what sabermetricians call "piss-poor." (.244/.316/.359) This streak corresponds to a .514 SLG, which is adequate for a first baseman. Of course, it comes with a lousy OBP of .297, but listen: I will take .297/.297/.514 over .244/.316/.359, OBP be

damned. (Actually, his OBP is over .300 over this stretch because he gets plunked a lot, but I'm not going to put that effort in.)

I can't help but wonder if Garko, a "cerebral" player from Stanford, hasn't been overthinking his plate appearances this season, a season in which he was all but guaranteed a starting slot and watching as the prime offensive engines (Martinez and Hafner) fell off the face of the Earth. Who knows? If he's more comfortable at the plate or something, I'll take it. Here's the problem: Garko has been very consistent month-to-month; consistently putrid. His OPS by month: .709, .661, .654, .679. I mean, that's just flat-out crummy.

Anyway, he had a single and a double and was plunked last night. Yay.

## 6) Break up the Jhonny Peralta!

Jhonny Peralta hit his THIRD triple of the season, three nights after hitting his SECOND. His career-high is 4, set in the Gork Season of 2005.

Peralta is hitting .336/.364/.639 as a cleanup hitter: while this is clearly not a significant sample size (130 or so PA), it sure is good. He is hitting .221/.267/.344 in the 5 hole and .317/.368/.603 in the 6: in much smaller samples of 20 AB each, he hits .300/.333/.700 in the 2 slot and .100/.143/.300 as the 3 guy.

The conclusion is obvious: always bat Peralta in an even-number slot.

## 7) Credit Where Credit Is Due Dept.

Armando Galarraga is ... well, he's very good, that's what he is. I hadn't heard much about this guy before this season, but look: he has a WHIP of 1.16, and ERA of 3.36, and is 9-4. His K rate is nothing special and his K:BB ratio under 2.00 isn't great, but the man can pitch. In his last ten starts, he's never given up more than 4 runs, and six of the ten didn't give up a THIRD.

Galarraga retired the first 9 in order and self-destructed a bit toward the end, but at 26, I think the Tigers have themselves a rotation fixture. Congrats.

While I'm here, Asdrubal Cabrera walked twice. All righty, then.

## 8) Managerial Head-Scratchers

Look, batting David Dellucci in the 2 slot is indefensible. Just insane. A miserable decision all around. I hate it. But, let's say for sake of argument that with runners on second and third, one out, and a left-hander with a 5.71 ERA and a chronic case of Being Casey Fossum on the mound, you have the option of sending up Dellucci or replacing him with an execrable goon who hits .225/.268/.314 against



right-handers.

Now, why am I talking about right-handers if Casey Fossum is on the hill? Because sending up the goon guarantees that Jim Leyland will replace Casey Fossum (who is bad) with Joel Zumaya (who is scary). Granted, Dellucci cannot hit left-handers (.167/.231/.250 last season, a mere 11 AB this season), but this is one of those things we talked about in the Texas series with Jamey Wright: sometimes, the hitter is not the driving force in the matchup. Making a marginal upgrade at the plate that forces the opposing manager to make an ENORMOUS upgrade on the mound has to be considered. Anyway, Zumaya retired the two hitters he faced in the 7<sup>th</sup> and Cleveland did not score.

Wow, half our corner outfielders are super bad.

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

Eric Wedge is made entirely out of Legos. Do not play David Dellucci.