

## The B-List: 7/31

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If you read between the lines in today's B-List, you might get the impression that Buff doesn't care much for the Indians' choices of #2 hitters. You might also find out that Fausto Carmona is still good, Raffy Perez is still good, and that Sal Fasano's moustache is still good. What you won't find out is why the Indians are playing defense like blue-footed boobies, because, well, there's probably not a good explanation for that.



<b>FINAL SCORE</b>				
<b>Tigers (55-53)</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Indians (47-60)</b>	1	0	0	0

W: Carmona (5-3) L: Verlander (8-11)

Baseball: the game in which you lose the game in which Nate Robertson pitches excrementally, but win the one in which Justin Verlander strikes out 9 in his first 5 innings.

### 1) A quick mention

I did not write about the 7/30 game, which was by turns hilarious, pathetic, ridiculous, horrifying, and ultimately still ridiculous, but I did want to note that if you load the bases in three of four innings, including once with zero outs, and score zero runs as a result of this, you have done a bad job. I will say this: I completely excuse Kelly Shoppach for striking out in the bottom of the 12<sup>th</sup> with the bases loaded, not because it was a good job or because Casey Fossum is even an

adequate pitcher, but rather because after hammering out FIVE extra-base hits (and Shoppach runs out home runs as fast as he runs out doubles), including the game-tying solo shot in the bottom of the 9<sup>th</sup>

, AND catching mook after mook after mook for twelve innings, I gotta figure he was feeling a little peaked at that point.

However, I thought it was excessive for the PA system to play "March of the Gladiators" in the 6<sup>th</sup> inning when the defense was so amazing. Doot doot doo-doo-doo-doo doot doot doot doot ....

## 2) Fausto!™

Consider this game: 6 IP, 3 H (all singles), 2 R, 10:5 GO:FO, 3 K, 1 BB. For the Fausto!™ of old, this ground ball ratio is actually a bit low, but it's still 2-to-1. One run scored because Curtis Granderson made it from first to third on a passed ball by Sal Fasano, and the other run scored because ... well, it's pretty hard to explain, but let's just say it was the result of Asdrubal Cabrera playing some rather non-standard defense at second base. (For example, Ramon Santiago advanced from second to third on a pop out that was really the Infield Fly Rule in action.) It's not a particularly

*deep*

start, but it beats the hell out of Carmona's last aborted

attempt, is certainly Quality, and isn't at all bad for a guy pretty fresh off the DL.

Of course, Carmona came out for the 7<sup>th</sup> because he'd only thrown 85 pitches and our bullpen was both exhausted (from the 13-inning affair) and painfully terrible (from me caring about it). Of course you send Carmona out for the 7<sup>th</sup>

. I'm not second-guessing that, I just wanted to point out how good Carmona's start was before that.

Because, naturally, *after* that, it sucked rocks.

Carmona allowed his first extra-base hit on a 2-2 count to Edgar Renteria, and Ryan Raburn singled after a botched bunt attempt to put runners on the corners. Carmona was certainly

aggressive in going after Dane Sardinha (four straight strikes, three fouled off), but then uncorked a wild pitch to score Renteria, and Raburn made it to third when he and Sal Fasano ... well, that's pretty hard to explain, too. Let's just say that given the choice between holding the ball and throwing it to the other player, Carmona and Fasano chose a third option. When Sardinha finally grounded out, Carmona had given up his 4<sup>th</sup> run and was finished for the day.

Look, even the overall line is pretty good, but I guess more than anything, it would appear that Carmona is capable of slotting back into the rotation as a regular: I don't necessarily need to see Cy Yong calibre work as I did last season, but some good quality innings would make me feel better about next year's team.

### 3) Death from the Left

Curtis Granderson is still a fine player, hitting .309/.374/.491 on the season and playing good center field. Last season, we discussed the possibility that Granderson had actually passed Grady Sizemore as the premier young CF in the division (Torii Hunter is not young), and Granderson hasn't done much this season to make you think last year was a fluke. He's flashing less power (he slugged .552 last season), hitting WAY fewer triples (he had 23 last season! Great googly moogly!) and fewer extra-base hits of all varieties (he had 84 last season, only 34 this season in a little more than half the AB). Sizemore is having a better season in 2008, and Granderson had the better season in 2007. Hopefully

this will be a fun discussion to have for many years to come.

Just like Sizemore, Granderson has addressed his one glaring weakness, a complete inability to hit left-handed pitching. After hitting .160/.225/.269 against lefties last year (which is truly execrable), Granderson is hitting .314/.360/.429 against them this season. Still, his OPS is almost 100 points lower against lefties, and it certainly makes sense to bring in a lefty to face him if you've got the option.

Anyway, that explains why Raffy Perez was brought in after Carmona retired Sardinha. And, of course, he pretty much did his job,

getting Granderson to bunt the ball poorly toward first baseman Ryan Garko. Inspired by Wednesday night's performance, Garko put on a red wig and floppy shoes and began spinning plates on long sticks. By the time Asdrubal Cabrera had struck him in the face with a shaving-cream pie, Granderson was safe at first.

Unfazed, even after allowing a single, Perez induced his nine billionth double play to end the inning. Then, in case you were wondering if Perez can pitch, or if Perez can get right-handed hitters out:

Miguel Cabrera, RH (.293/.352/.499): struck out swinging

Magglio Ordonez, RH (.319/.377/.499):  
struck out swinging

Marcus Thames, RH (20 HR, .924 OPS  
against LHP): struck out swinging

Lost in Wednesday's debacle was the fact that, although his defensive error on a potential inning-ending DP ball cost the Indians a run, Perez was the only pitching bright spot, throwing 1 2/3 hitless, walkless innings and having a similar stretch of staring down righties in the 7<sup>th</sup> of that game.

It's almost immaterial that Raffy Perez is a left-handed relief pitcher: he is a relief pitcher who happens to throw left-handed.

(Note: the only substantive difference in

his left-right splits is that righties slug .415 off him and lefties slug .293. But he has a weird-ass 17:10 K:BB ratio against lefties and a 29:7 K:BB against righties. I think that's because that Randy Johnson Junior slider-at-your-back-foot looks a lot more hittable coming in to a right-hander, whereas the left-handed hitter say, "Shit, I can't hit **that**, I'm takin' it and hoping for a ball call."&quot;)

#### 4) Death from the 'stache

Sal Fasano may not be the best veteran backup catcher in the league: his passed ball directly led to the first run, and his

actions on the wild pitch in the 7<sup>th</sup> earned him his second error on the season. Although not fast, he certainly is slow. And he can hardly be legitimately characterized as a .320 hitter: in real life, Fasano is pretty much the low-sample hitter you hope tops out and the .250 he put up for Baltimore in 2005.

This having been said, Fasano has been a real boon to this team since Victor Martinez went on the DL and Yamid Haad was determined to suffer from terminal Yamid Haadness. Fasano collected his second extra-base hit of the season, a double, to raise his SLG to an evern

.400. He also collected 2 RBI to double his season total: Fasano is now on a three-game RBI streak, and scored two runs to triple his season total. He was also instrumental in the inning that proved Verlander's undoing by showing his veteran savvy by shrewdly being hit by a pitch, which was followed by a walk to Cabrera and a three-run tater by Sizemore. Could Greg Zaun do THAT? Yeah, I don't think so.

"Perfect backup catcher"  
my butt. Fasano's where it's at.

## **5) Eye of the Tiger, or at least the**

# Optometrist

Lost in Wednesday's debacle was Asdrubal Cabrera's first career 4-hit game, garnered from the 9 slot. Yesterday, Cabrera collected but one hit, but was never recorded out as he drew three walks, including the aforementioned walk in front of Sizemore's blast which came after being down 1-2.

Since being called back up into regular duty July 18, Cabrera has drawn 7 walks against 10 strikeouts in

fewer than 50 plate appearances: he's also collected 11 hits, including a pair of doubles and an inexplicable homer. This makes his slash numbers since his return a very palatable .282/.404/.410. Of course, on the season, those numbers are still preposterously bad at .203/.307/.279, and there are enough times even since his callup that he's taken just hideous, inept swings at balls. However, I don't think it's outrageous to think that Cabrera has made some adjustments since being sent down in June, and a .404 OBP is nothing to sneeze at, walk-driven or not. The sample size is awfully small to lobby for him to be glued into the 2 slot

behind Sizemore, but ...

## 6) Lobbying to put Cabrera or Choo in the 2 slot

... it must be done anyway. Please, please, **please** put someone in the 2 hole who is capable of getting on base more than a quarter of the time. The guy there yesterday is hitting .210/.257/.329 on the season. That's just atrocious.

Well, maybe like Cabrera, his numbers are early-season products and he's doing better lately? No! He just finished up July "hitting" .155/.180/.310! One eighty! His on-base percentage in July was ONE EIGHTY! That's preposterically execrable! Flabberworthless! Incongruously! Also very bad! For comparison, David Dellucci, who is terrible, hit .241/.241/.370 in July. Yes, he drew exactly zero walks. In the two hole. Zero. An OPS of SIX TWELVE. Which was better than his right-handed equivalent by ONE HUNDRED TWENTY TWO POINTS.

Please. Please. I'm begging you. There is a line between "development" and "anguish-causing tooth-drilling soul-flaying torture." You have crossed it. That guy can't hit second. He won't. And he can't. You're killing me. Get the pair of them out of the two slot.

## **7) Credit Where Credit Is Due Dept.**

Masa Kobayashi threw a perfect 9<sup>th</sup> with a strikeout. I cannot pretend that I consider this significant.

Ben Francisco made an outstanding catch in left field going back and to his left.

## **8) Ho Hum Dept.**

Grady Sizemore hit his 27<sup>th</sup> home run of the season. Later in the game he stole his 27

th

base. He leads the team with 63 RBI (he drove in 4 yesterday). He doesn't just lead the team in walks,

he leads any pair of teammates in walks. His 27 stolen bases are one more than the ENTIRE REST OF THE TEAM COMBINED.

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

Eric Wedge, inspired by Prince Fielder converting to vegetarianism, has decided to eat nothing but wood, Play-Doh, and

the non-Johnny cast of  
&quot;Johnny and the  
Sprites.&quot; Do not play David  
Dellucci.