

The B-List: 8/6

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Wednesday, August 06 2008 7:00 PM -

It was a Three Mile Island kinda day for the Indians yesterday in Tampa, as the bullpen completely melted down in the 9th inning, allowing the Rays to score six runs and come back from a 7-4 deficit to win the game 10-7 on a walk off blast by Carlos Pena. Buff steadfastly refuses to even acknowledge the 9th inning in today's B-List. But he does talk about Peralta's ridiculous hot streak, Raffy Perez's efficiency, Andy Marte's laziness, and his Man Love for Eddie Moo despite yesterday's performance.



FINAL SCORE

Indians (49-64)	1	0	1	0
Improbable Rays (68-45)	0	0	0	0

W: Percival (2-0) L: Kobayashi (4-5)

There's nothing quite like a day game in an airplane hangar.

1) Let's get this out of the way

I am NOT going to write about the bottom of the ninth inning.

2) So much for the five-inning magic

Okay, it was probably a bit much to expect Jeremy Sowers to extend his streak of starting games with 5 perfect innings to three, but Sowers started off with a **blearg h** in this one. After a groundout, he gave up a single to Bubbles Zobrist, a hitter so

poor they signed Jason Bartlett to feign hitting instead. Zobrist was actually just called up to replace Jonny Gomes, the Rob Deer of the Aughts without the pesky abilities to actually play outfield or avoid punching other players. Anyway, Zobrist got a single, and they stopped the game briefly to revive some of the fainted spectators and give Zobrist the ball.

Now, part of the reason Zobrist got a hit was that Sowers had started him off 3-0: he grooved a strike for 3-1, but still in a hitter's count, Zobrist blindly guessed right. Sowers still has trouble controlling the strike zone, and this game looked little different, especially after Carlos Pena took an 0-2 fount to 3-2, Zobrist stole second, and Pena finally walked. Joe Maddon went to the well once too often on a double steal and Sal Fasano, bless his aged heart, caught Pena on the back end. This proved important in that Evan Longoria laced a single, and the center fielder ... well, let's just say that two bases later, this was not a good play by the center fielder. Dioner Navarro made this moot by blasting a 2-0 pitch over the wall in left and it was quickly 3-1.

So, let's run down the Jeremy Sowers How To Suck List:

Walking batters: check
Falling behind in counts: check
Giving up taters: check

Yep, this is pretty much a lost cause, especially with the B-Team out in the field: Fasano catching, Andy Gonzalez (!) playing first (!), Ryan Garko as DH (!!!), Grady Sizemore with the day off ... all this and facing Scott Kazmir. That's a pretty sorry lineup that screams "Getaway Day!"; So Sowers is pretty much toasted, right?

Sure enough, Sowers fell behind Bartlett (playing DH! That's like Jason Tyner playing DH! Oh, wait, we've done that. So have the Twins. I think I might be confused as to what that "H" stands for.) 2-1 and gave up a double,

which, let's face it, it pretty hard to do. Also quite crummy. So Sowers is ...

... and then a funny thing happened. Sowers started to *pitch*.

He gave up no more hits in the second and Bartlett was stranded at second.

He gave up no hits in the third, walking Carlos Pena only after forcing him to foul off three two-strike pitches (I'm not giving in, you Carlos Pena you), recording a pair of groundouts and a fly to left.

He gave up a hit in the fourth, but erased him on a double play grounder. The first batter had grounded out.

He got the first two batters in the fifth to ground out, then suffered an error by Gonzalez to put Bugs Zobrist on, where he could score after a walk to Pena and a single by Longoria.

And in the 6th, pushing 100 pitches, he simply retired the side in order, his last out a swinging K. Of his 12 pitches in the 6th, 9 were strikes.

So, after the leadoff double in the 2nd, Sowers threw five innings of 2-hit, 2-walk ball with a K and one unearned run. I mean, no, it's not fair to cut down the sample size just to make a guy look good, but I guess my point is, on a day on which it would have been very easy to lose his composure, backed by what could be expected to be a poor offense (it didn't turn out that way, but in the second it didn't look so hot), Jeremy Sowers knuckled down and pitched very well, showing a lot of poise on the road against a division leader in front of dozens of fans.

As with most Sowers starts, the overall numbers don't look that great: 3 walks to 2 strikeouts is still poor, and keeping the ball in the park would be a novel surprise he should try more often. His 9:6 GO:FO ratio was still encouraging. Sowers is still more promising than any number of Matt Ginters thrown into a hopper and mashed together into a fine ÜberGinter Paste.

3) C'mon, you're going to talk about it, right?

No, I am not.

4) Jholtin' Jhonny!

On June 30th, Jhonny Peralta had his first career five-hit game against the White Sox. We scored seven runs, but lost the game.

Jhonny Peralta had five hits yesterday. We scored 7 runs and lost the game.

You know what? I'm willing to accept more five-hit games from Jhonny Peralta, even if it risks extending the streak.

Really, Peralta could almost literally not be hotter. (*Literally*, he could be coming off a 4-for-4 game instead of a pedestrian 2-for-4 game.) He now has a 10-game hit streak. He hit .303/.327/.596 in July, and is thus far hitting .500 (11-for-22) in August. Of his five hits, three were for extra bases: a pair of doubles and a homer. His first two hits, including the homer, were to center. He pulled the other three hits, but ... come on, man, how are going to complain about a guy who just went FIVE-FOR-FIVE?

Well, you could mention that because of the rest of the offense, he had two runs scored and two batted in. Given that one of each was his own homer, that's kinda poor. But certainly not Peralta's fault.

5) You gotta talk about the bottom of the ninth

I will do no such thing.

6) I find your harmless flailing amusing, but irrelevant

Raffy Perez is sublime.

Given the 7th inning in relief of Sowers, Perez recorded a quick four-pitch strikeout of Gabe Gross. He then got ahead of Aki Iwamura 0-2 before Iwamura finally beat out an infield single. Unfazed, Perez got Zobrist to fly out harmlessly and struck out Carlos Pena swinging on three pitches. Of Perez' 15 pitches, 12 were strikes.

Fifteen is not enough pitches to exhaust Raffy Perez, so he trotted out for a second inning (albeit more gracefully than Asdrubal Cabrera). Of his 13 pitches, 11 were strikes: included were a four-pitch strikeout of Longoria and a three-pitch strikeout of Willy Aybar. Dioner Navarro was able to lift the ball all the way to the second baseman for a popout.

Could Perez have been more dominant? Again, of course *literally* he could have. One man hit the ball out of the infield and another reached base. But that was it. It was smooth. And awesome.

7) Yeah, but that sets up a great contrast with the ninth, right?

I suppose it does. I remain silent on the issue.

8) The worst injury in the world

Asdrubal Cabrera had to leave the game in the 6th inning: the resulting change forced wholesale changes to the Indians' lineup. Gonzalez went from 1B to 3B, Jamey Carroll moved from 3B to 2B, Sal Fasano (Sal Fasano!) moved from behind the plate to first, and Kelly Shoppach's "day off" became no such thing as he was sent to catch.

And how did Cabrera turn his ankle, having to be helped from the field? Was it beating out a grounder? Stealing a base? Diving for a shot up the middle?

No. It was jogging onto the field to take his defensive position.

9) Worse than the injuries to the pitchers in the ninth?

Shut up, you.

10) The worst effort in the world

Andy Marte, he of the massive .179 batting average and the power of an EZ Bake Oven, was called on to pinch-hit for Ryan Garko in the 3rd. He promptly rapped out a single, and later had a two-run double in the 5th for his 7th and 8th RBI on

the game. Of course, as DH, he couldn't really be used in the Chinese Fire Drill Shenanigans of the next inning, but some things can't be helped.

You know what can be helped? Moving out of the batter's box when you hit a ground ball.

Yeah, I know it's frustrating, and yeah, it was unlikely that Pena would botch that play. But great Confucius' ring tone, that's just lame-assed. Wedge benched him, and huzzah for that. That was awful.

11) Well, now you're just teasing me: I thought when you said "worst effort..."

Isn't "Suite Life of Zach and Cody" on or something?

12) Speed kills!

Shin-Soo Choo's hustle on the basepaths led directly to the Indians' 7th run, as he stole second, advanced to third on a groundout to short, and scored on Troy Percival's wild pitch. Choo also had two singles, scored two runs, and collected his 27th RBI of the season.

For completeness' sake, the center fielder led off the game with a homer and smashed a double, giving him 5 extra-base hits in his last five games, each of which he's hit in (7 hits overall).

13) Please?

Okay, look, I'm an irrational Eddie Moo honk. I've been on this guy for three years now. As a 22-year-old in AA in 2006, he posted sick numbers with outrageous strike-to-ball ratios: in a ten-game cup of coffee in the bigs, he posted a 12:0 K:BB ratio and an ERA under 3.00. I lobbied for him for months and finally got to see him: he was still a bit raw, but I was hooked.

Last year, he was simply awful. There's no spin here. He stunk here, in Beefalo, anywhere you wanted to put him. He was bad. He was also 23 with limited experience.

So when he started ripping off his good streak starting June 28th (10 straight scoreless outings), I was ready to embrace him anew. Sure, he had a terrible outing against the Tigers in the absurdist 14-12 loss, but he got back on the horse with a scoreless inning Tuesday.

So, yeah, I'm heartbroken. I doubt they'll give him another chance to close, which I think he can do. Happy now?

(And Kobayashi sucked, too. Phbt!)

14) Completely False Statement Hiatus

I'm givin' Wedge the day off for appropriately benching Garko, and besides, Dellucci didn't play. I'd like to see the argument that Choo should absorb Dellucci's plate appearances, though.